

Sunday 26 May 1996 • Olympic Park • Melbourne

\$ 3



# GRAND FINAL

1995/96



COVER PHOTO BY STUART MILLIGAN/SPORTING PIX. FRANCIS AWARITEFE • MARCONI FAIRFIELD AND TOM PONDELJAK • MELBOURNE KNIGHTS.

SPECIAL SOUVENIR PROGRAM



***We're right behind Australian soccer.***



Ericsson telecommunications is proud to announce the start of a long-term partnership with Australian soccer. As major sponsor, we'll be doing all we can to get behind the world's favourite sport, right here in Australia

**ERICSSON** 





The Grand Final of this inaugural season of the Ericsson Cup is the culmination of the most successful year of soccer in Australia and we at Ericsson are proud to have been able to contribute to this success.

Twelve teams kicked off the Ericsson Cup in October last year and in doing so they wrote themselves into the history of this sport in Australia. The contribution of those clubs, their players, Soccer Australia, Ericsson Australia and the supporters of this, the world's favourite game has achieved unparalleled success.

But the vision for soccer in Australia does not end with today's Grand Final and the awarding, for the first time, of the Ericsson Cup. This season has merely been a "curtain raiser" to the vision of Soccer Australia. While attendance figures for the season have soared almost 30 per cent, the vision is for Australian soccer to assume a higher profile in mainstream Australian sport.

At the launch of the Ericsson Cup, our sponsorship was acknowledged for its potential contribution towards ensuring that Australian soccer could compete against the international market in attracting and retaining players of the highest calibre. 1996 has seen a number of high profile Australian players return from the playing fields of Europe and players are now viewing Australian soccer as a viable force in the world of professional soccer.

I take this opportunity to thank every one of you for your support and I congratulate you on the success of the 1996 season. May the best team win this inaugural Ericsson Cup Grand Final.

**Kjell Sorme**  
Managing Director, Ericsson Australia

The Grand Final is the celebration of the best ever season of National League soccer in Australia.

Twelve teams started this season's Ericsson Cup back in

October 1995. Today just two teams are left and one team will lift the Ericsson Cup and be Champions for 1996.

Over 900,000 people have attended Ericsson Cup matches this season in a year that has redirected soccer in this country. The revamped national league must surely now be seen as one of Australia's most important and popular sporting competitions and the Ericsson Cup Grand Final will become one of Australian sports biggest events.

Increased crowds, greater media exposure and an increasing acceptance of our game and competition in mainstream Australia are the achievements of a season which included exciting and enterprising soccer.

Ericsson Australia are to be congratulated on their commitment to the world game at a domestic level. Soccer Australia has formed a partnership which we believe will be successful and enduring.

A final thank you to the hundreds of thousands of soccer spectators who included Ericsson Cup soccer as part of their lives and I know they would have not been disappointed with the entertainment and skill of the players.

Soccer Australia congratulates today's teams in reaching the Grand Final, which in itself is a major achievement. I'm sure all soccer enthusiasts would join with me in thanking the players, the officials and the Ericsson Cup clubs on an unbelievable season.

May the best team win today and we look forward to the start of the 1996/97 season in just under five months.

**David Hill**  
Chairman, Soccer Australia



# MARCONI FAIRFIELD

## THE 1988

**Playing a finals series and Grand Final to decide Australia's champion soccer team has been a controversial issue since the concept was introduced in 1984. Ray Gatt**

**remembers the day he was converted to the 'sudden-death' cause.**

It has been one of the most debated and contentious issues in Australian soccer. Bring it up in discussion with any follower of the game and you are sure to be bombarded with a tirade of emotional arguments for and against.

Just like the monarchy v republican debate, there's no middle ground here. No room for compromise. It's a case of world-wide and long held tradition versus an Australian sporting way of life.

Of course, I'm talking about the perennial discussion concerning the merits of the first-past-the-post system as opposed to the Grand Final concept to determine the champion team at the end of the season.

Having been brought up in the old school, I have to admit there was a time when neither heaven nor earth could force me to alter my thinking that the real champions were the teams which performed consistently over the season and overcame every hurdle put in their way.

The "last one standing" philosophy always appealed to me.

It is the way of the old football world and, I guess, it will always be – as is shown through just about every prominent country in the world today where Grand Finals, apart from the Cup competitions, are frowned upon.

Of course, in Australia things are done differently. To those born outside this great country, football, or soccer as it is called by the uninitiated, has not cultivated the so-called true spirit of the sport.

Too often ideas are borrowed from other codes and other sports, through the pre-occupation, or should that be fixation, with finals football and, in particular, Grand Finals.

Initially, the national league could never seem to get it right. It had a problem deciding which way to go. It was torn between both concepts and, as a result, the game here suffered a little as the league, from one season to the next, chopped and changed from first-past-the-post to the Grand Final.

I have to confess that my whole outlook changed in the season of 1988 – the first year the national league decided that, after too many years of chopping and changing, all future championships would be decided by an end of season finale.

Whether it was fate or good fortune, we'll never know, but the league fell on its feet when the first



# V SYDNEY UNITED- CLASSIC

Grand Final between Marconi Fairfield and Sydney United produced one of the best games I've seen in a long time, and one of the most thrilling and dramatic for that matter.

Surely anyone lucky enough to be in the crowd of just over 17,000 that day at Parramatta Stadium will still fondly cradle the memory of a wonderful spectacle which captured the imagination of the soccer public, whether you were a Marconi Fairfield, Sydney United or neutral fan.

This was truly a game of fluctuating fortunes in which emotions ebbed and flowed through almost 150 minutes of drama and pathos. No Hollywood screen writer could have scripted this match better.

From the moment referee Chris Bambridge blew his whistle to that grand veteran Tony Henderson's final kick more than two hours later, this game was destined to book its place in the annals of Australian soccer.

The players on display read like a who's who of the sport. Marconi Fairfield boasted the likes of Frank Farina, David Lowe, Gerry Gomez, Ian Gray, Zlatko Nasteovski, Steve Calderan, Tommy McCulloch, Paul Carter, Peter Katholos and Robbie Wheatley, while Sydney United had the likes of Graham Arnold,

Robbie Slater, Vedran Rozic, Wally Savor, Graham Jennings, Alan Hunter and Manis Lamond.

From the start both teams showed they were not going to let the tension of the Grand Final get to them. The play continually fluctuated up and down the field - if that is what you could call the playing surface at Parramatta Stadium.

In fact, the ground resembled Bondi Beach with pockets of sand littering the arena and generally making life difficult for the players. That they somehow managed to produce such a magnificent showpiece was a tribute to their class and professionalism.

Despite all the action, it wasn't until the 40th minute that Marconi Fairfield broke the deadlock. Farina, in his last game on Australian soil before going overseas, made one of those typical runs down the right flank.

He squared the ball into the box where the ever-alert Lowe backheeled for Calderan to push it past Sydney United goalkeeper, Tony Franken.

Big Hunter, still going strong these days at Brisbane Strikers, breathed new life into the game 10 minutes after the break when he smashed a volley past Bob Catlin to level the scores.

The match was soon a war of attrition with chances going begging at both ends. Eventually it went into extra time.



▶ **TOM PONDELJAK** - the Knights striker is likely to cause problems for the Marconi Fairfield defence.

ERICSSON CUP TOP SIX GRAND FINAL





LUKE CASSERLY • MARCONI FAIRFIELD



JOSIP SIMUNIC • MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

Sydney United, chasing their first title, appeared to be getting on top and it was no surprise when Lamond bobbed up into the box to nod home and give the Reds a 2-1 lead with time running out.

But, it wasn't over with that man Farina conjuring one, last, desperate piece of magic. He raced on to a through pass and was headed into the box when there was a clash of bodies with Mark Jones. Penalty!

Showing he had ice water running through his veins, Nastevski calmly slotted home the penalty to send the game into a penalty shoot-out.

Talk about drama and passion, the shoot-out had it all.

Emotions ran the full gamut. Ecstasy one moment as the ball crashed into the net, utter despair and disbelief the next as the ball hit a post or went wide.

Day was rapidly turning into night as Marconi Fairfield captain Henderson, playing his last match after a distinguished career of 296 games in the national league, took the long, lonely walk from the centre circle to the penalty spot.

The fate of the game was in his right foot. If he scored Marconi Fairfield would be celebrating yet another championship long into the night. He placed the ball on the spot and, with that recognisable swagger, turned and took five steps back.

Most of the Sydney United players had turned their backs, not game to look. Others held their hands to their face and peeked through their fingers, hoping against hope. Some looked skywards willing for some divine intervention.

There was to be no miracle. The roar of the crowd and the shouts of delight from the nearby Marconi Fairfield players told them the cruel story.

In a fairytale finish, Henderson put the ball into the net where Franken had been standing a second earlier. He disappeared under an avalanche of team-mates and Marconi Fairfield officials and the Cup was headed to Bossley Park.

Without doubt that game set the benchmark for future Grand Finals.

However, I'm afraid there hasn't quite been another match in the ensuing years to come anywhere near rivalling it, though Sydney Olympic's first championship win when they beat Marconi Fairfield 2-0 in 1989-1990 in front of a record NSL crowd would have matched it for sheer emotion.

Grown men unashamedly cried tears of joy that day at Parramatta Stadium as Sydney Olympic, the perennial bridesmaids of Australian soccer, finally got their hands on the championship trophy some believed they would never get to hold.

Needless to say, the ouzo flowed and plaster plates were smashed around Sydney for the next week or so as Sydney Olympic fans celebrated in true Greek style.

That was to be the end, for two seasons anyway, of Sydney's domination of the end-of-season finals.

South Melbourne got into the act when they beat Melbourne Knights 5-4 in a penalty shoot-out after the scores had been locked 1-1 after extra time. Again, nerves were tested to the full and hearts raced a hundred times faster as each player walked up to the spot and their meeting with destiny.

As it was, the Melbourne Knights folded under the pressure of the shoot-out and so began one of the most frustrating and agonising losing sequences in Australian soccer history. The Knights were to go down again in a shoot-out the following season, beaten 4-2 on penalties by Adelaide City after the score had been locked at 0-0.

Another heart-breaking loss to the finals team of the 90s, Adelaide City in the 1993-94 Grand Final when Damian Mori produced that wonder goal, seemed to consign the Melbourne Knights to the bridesmaid, never the bride tag.

But the drought many believed would never break was finally broken last season when the Melbourne Knights beat their nemesis Adelaide City 2-0 in front of a sell-out crowd at Hindmarsh Stadium to notch their first league title.

Today, a new chapter will be written in the history of the national league. We can only hope it will be yet another moment to savor. •

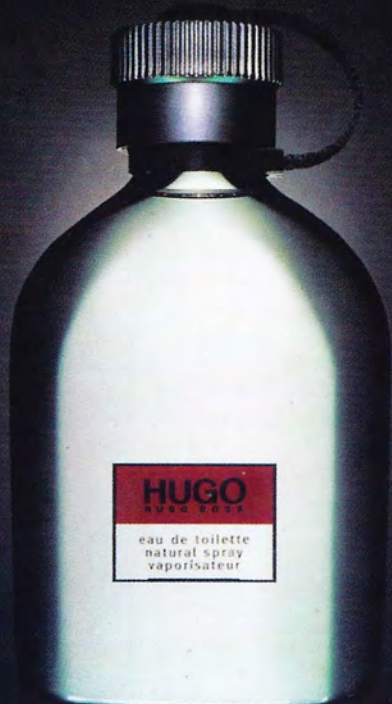




No stiff suits.  
No cheesy  
smiles. No beaches.  
just a great  
fragrance.

DON'T IMITATE

INNOVATE



HUGO  
HUGO BOSS





*Major sponsor and carrier of Soccer Australia.*



**ANSETT AUSTRALIA**

One of the world's great airlines.



# FOREWORD



The success of the 1996 Ericsson Cup is something in which we can all take pride.

The clubs, the players, Soccer Australia, and most importantly the supporters, have made 1995/96 the most successful season in the history of Australia's national soccer competition.

Ericsson Australia is particularly proud to have been able to play a leading role in what the Chairman of Soccer Australia, David Hill, has described as the awakening of soccer as the sleeping giant of Australian sport.

Speaking via satellite from London at the launch of the Ericsson Cup, he said the support of Ericsson would lift the profile and the financial viability of soccer in Australia.

This certainly appears to have been the case. Everyone has rallied behind the new format and, as evidence of this, home and away attendances have risen to an all-time record of over 850,000.

Ericsson Australia has approached its participation in this sponsorship as a partner to Soccer Australia and the 12 member clubs, where each of our organisations is involved in the promotion, the marketing and the future development of the game. This has resulted in a season of significantly increased media attention and public awareness. The results have been good for soccer and for Ericsson, and this augurs well for our continuing commitment to Australia's premier national soccer competition.

I congratulate every single team for an extremely competitive and exciting season, with particular congratulations to the Top Six. I am sure these finals will be a fitting culmination to soccer's most successful year.

**Kjell Sorme**  
Managing Director  
Ericsson Australia



There can be no doubt that season 1995/96 has been the most successful in the 19 year history of the national league.

At the start of this season Soccer Australia launched the new look *Ericsson Cup* which we announced as the strongest and most attractive ever.

Our vision was for a competition which was competitive, received increased media exposure and increased crowds.

After 33 rounds of football the decisions made back in September 1995 have been vindicated.

The Australian sporting public has witnessed 12 competitive teams fight for the national league honours, with the Top Six undecided until the final round was played.

The level of media exposure for our game, especially the electronic media, has dramatically increased. Highlights of most *Ericsson Cup* matches are now shown on the news of virtually every television channel and extensively in more than twenty countries throughout Asia.

The most pleasing aspect is the increase in crowds. The *Ericsson Cup* eclipsed last year's attendances for the same number of games by a staggering 127,340 people. Over 850,000 people attended the 33 rounds of Ericsson Cup matches, making our game one of Australia's most popular summer sports. On behalf of Soccer Australia I would like to thank those spectators, whose passion for football is paramount to our success.

Ericsson Australia's decision to invest in our competition has been a worthy exercise and we thank them for their commitment and foresight.

The final series should be an exciting series with big crowds, increased public interest and competitive matches leading up to the *Ericsson Cup* Grand Final on Sunday, 26 May.

Congratulations to our Top Six teams for their achievements to date and good luck for the finals.

**David Hill**  
Chairman  
Soccer Australia





**Coach:** John Perin

**Years in national league:** 1977 to 1995-96

**Championships:** 1986, 1991-92, 1993-94

**Runners Up:** 1992-93, 1994-95 **Finalists:** 1986, 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92, 1992-93, 1993-94, 1994-95

Adelaide City without Zoran Matic and Sergio Melta. It's like peaches without cream, Bogart without Bacall, a football without air.

But that's the reality that stared the Zebras and their fans in the face at the start of the season.

After 11 seasons at the helm, the man many believed to be the best and most astute coach in the Ericsson Cup finally decided it was time for a break from the game he had served so successfully and wonderfully well.

And the man who has racked up the most games in the national league, Melta, followed him into the Adelaide sunset.

With three championships and five Grand Final appearances under their belts, Matic and Melta truly went out of the game winners even though their final match was a heart-breaking defeat by the Melbourne Knights in last season's Grand Final at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Now they were gone, there was a

belief that the heart and soul of Adelaide City would go with them.

And, for a time in the early part of this season, you could hear the cries of "I told you so".

Under new coach, former Coca-Cola Socceroo and Adelaide City stalwart John Perin, the Zebras struggled to stay in touch with the runaway leaders Marconi Fairfield and UTS Olympic.

Their results were inconsistent and, at times, ordinary. Some foolishly questioned Perin's ability as a coach, even though he spent a number of seasons as Matic's understudy.

Perin, in turn, questioned the commitment of the players. During one candid moment after a loss to

UTS Olympic in round four, he confided that he didn't think the team had the commitment or the courage to pick itself up.

A shock loss to Newcastle Breakers in round 8 seemed to add some weight to his comments as Adelaide City slumped to eighth spot on the table.

And it got worse. At the end of round 18, the club regarded as the aristocrats of Australian soccer had slipped to an inglorious ninth spot.

Perin said at one stage he could hear the Hindmarsh Stadium crowd calling for Matic to return.

Luckily, Perin has the sort of character and determination to overcome such barbs. He has heard it all before as a player.

Not surprisingly, then, things started to turn around for the better for Adelaide City and, not surprisingly again, it coincided with a remarkable goalscoring run from Damian Mori.

In the space of 10 matches, the tank-like speedster with the tree-trunk legs knocked in 16 goals and, along the way, broke John Kosmina's long-standing record for most goals scored in a season.

With Mori in such devastating form, Brad Hassell recapturing his best and the likes of Alex Tobin, Milan Ivanovic, Goran Lozanovski and Craig Foster doing their part, the Zebras got on a roll and started to exert tremendous pressure on those teams above them.

By round 31 they had zoomed to fourth spot – just a win from challenging Marconi Fairfield and UTS Olympic at the top of the table. ●

### Adelaide City's record against the other semi-finalists this season:

v UTS Olympic lost 0-1 at Marconi Stadium  
v Marconi Fairfield lost 0-2 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v West Adelaide won 2-1 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Brisbane Strikers won 7-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Melbourne Knights drew 2-2 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Sydney United drew 2-2 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v UTS Olympic drew 0-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Marconi Fairfield lost 2-4 at Marconi Stadium  
v West Adelaide lost 0-2 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Brisbane Strikers lost 1-7 at Suncorp Stadium  
v Melbourne Knights won 1-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre  
v Sydney United drew 2-2 at Sydney United Sports Centre  
v UTS Olympic drew 2-2 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Marconi Fairfield won 3-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v West Adelaide won 3-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Brisbane Strikers drew 0-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Melbourne Knights won 5-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Sydney United drew 2-2 at Sydney United Sports Centre  
v UTS Olympic drew 1-1 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Sydney United at Hindmarsh Stadium



◀ **GORAN LOZANOVSKI**, one of the new generation of stars at Adelaide City.



No. of previous finals series: **7**

(1986, 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92, 1992-93, 1993-94, 1994-95)

Location	P	W	D	L	F	A
In Adelaide	11	6	—	5	11	7
Elsewhere	15	11	1	3	28	15
Total	26	17	1	8	39	22

**Biggest Home Win** 4-0 v Wollongong City, 1993**Biggest Away Win** 3-1 v UTS Olympic, 1986**Heaviest Home Loss** 0-2 v Melbourne Knights, 1995**Heaviest Away Loss** 2-4 v South Melbourne, 1990Finals history against other **1995-96** finals teams

Finals opponent	P	W	D	L	F	A
Brisbane Strikers	—	—	—	—	—	—
Marconi	3	2	—	1	4	2
Melbourne Knights	5	3	1	1	4	3
Sydney United	2	1	—	1	2	1
UTS Olympic	4	2	—	2	6	5
West Adelaide	2	1	—	1	2	2

Players' finals **records**

No.	Name	Previous finals	W	D	L	Goals
1	Jason PETKOVIC	3	2	0	1	0
2	Sasa NEDELJKOVIC					
3	Mark YATES	2	1	0	1	0
4	Milan IVANOVIC	21	13	1	7	0
5	Alex TOBIN	26	17	1	8	0
7	Damian MORI	15	9	2	4	7
8	Brad HASSELL	8	6	0	2	4
9	Joe MULLEN	25	16	1	8	3
10	John GIBSON	5	3	0	2	0
11	Goran LOZANOVSKI	8	6	0	2	0
12	Jamie PERIN	—	—	—	—	—
13	Angelo COSTANZO	—	—	—	—	—
14	Brad ARMOUR	—	—	—	—	—
15	Joel MARINO	—	—	—	—	—
16	Dino MENNILLO	1	1	0	0	0
17	Kosta SALAPASIDIS	—	—	—	—	—
18	Mark BRAZZALE	4	1	1	2	0
19	Craig FOSTER	6	3	2	1	0
20	Daniel MIGNANO					
21	Michael PIRONE					
22	Adrian LANDORIO					
23	Matthew MOORE					
24	Steven DEGIOVANNIELLO					
25	Robert SARACENO					
26	Nick BARBATO					

**COACH** John Perin, **ASSISTANT COACH** John Nyskohus,  
**TRAINER** Brian Bannan, **GEAR STEWARD** Joe Camilleri, **DOCTOR** Dr Tom Mittiga,  
**PHYSIO** Glen Dods, **MASSEUR** Remo Paris, **CLUB PRESIDENT** Fred Lenzi,  
**GENERAL/ADMINISTRATION MANAGER** Irene Toner,  
**SPORTS DIRECTOR** Charlie Capogrelo, **TEAM MANAGER** John Besir.

**NOTE:** All statistics include teams in contention for a top six place prior to round 33 being played.



With over 30 goals to his credit in the preliminary part of the season, the game's man-of-the-moment has already written himself into the pages of national league history.

Mori, born of a Slovenian father and Australian mother, did so when he passed former Coca-Cola Socceroo and Sydney City great John Kosmina's record for the most number of goals scored in a season.

He managed it in 24 rounds when he passed Kosmina's record of 23 set in the 1982 season.

Normally, such a feat would ensure much cartwheeling and shouting to the world. But Mori, 25, took it all in his stride. It was as if he wondered: "What's all the fuss about?"

Don't get the wrong impression. It's not that he is blasé about it or that he has a disregard for the achievement.

No, he said he is thrilled and honoured to be even mentioned in the same breath as someone like Kosmina.

It's just that he is uncomfortable with the limelight.

There is no way he is going to get caught up in a tidal wave of self importance. He'd much prefer to deflect all the credit to others such as his team-mates.

"Of course it (breaking the record) was good," he said recently. "I was honoured but I got a lot of help from my team-mates. Besides, there are more important things for me.

"It is far better to win games for your country or your team than seeking personal achievements.

"I want to win another championship with the club. That's where I get my buzz."



Not even that freak goal, scored after just 3.67 seconds against Sydney United at Hindmarsh Stadium this season, has broken his focus.

It is that sort of strength of character – not to mention his incredible scoring powers – which has endeared him to the Adelaide City faithful.

Mori, now in his fourth season with Adelaide City, has already won two championships with the Zebras and admits he has his sights set on another one this season.

"That would be great," he said. "We had a rough trot at the start of the season but things seem to be falling into place at the right time."

Mori usually saves his best for finals time – and that spells trouble for the others.

Who will forget that spectacular individual goal against the Melbourne Knights which helped Adelaide City to win the 1993-94 Grand Final in Melbourne?

Mori collected the ball near half-way. Even as he charged down the left, there seemed little danger for the Melbourne Knights.

But he decided to cut back inside, switched the ball to his right foot and, from all of 30 metres, cracked a thunderous right foot shot which gave goalkeeper David Miller no chance at all.

We wait with bated breath for the next Mori instalment. ●





**Coach:** Bruce Stowell

**Years in national league:** 1991-92 to 1995-96

**Championships:** nil

**Runners-up:** nil

**Finalists:** nil

One name probably best sums up the huge success of the Brisbane Strikers this season - Frank Farina.

While it is often said that one man doesn't make a team, the former Coca-Cola Socceroo great who had such a distinguished career playing in Europe has gone close to making a lie of that statement.

In his return to Australian soccer, Farina has done much to lift the profile and on-field character of the Brisbane Strikers, who really have struggled for recognition not only in the national league but in their home state,

But, surprisingly, it wasn't a rosy start for Farina, the Brisbane Strikers and coach Bruce Stowell, who came under enormous pressure in the opening two months after the club managed just two wins in their first six games.

They also suffered a terrible 7-0 beating at the hands of Adelaide City - a loss which rocked the club to its foundations.

However, and quite incredibly, it all started to change during the second round in which they were unbeaten with seven wins and four draws as they climbed up the table.

And the amazing thing is that Brisbane Strikers achieved those fantastic results during an awful run of injuries and suspensions.

At one stage, Stowell was struggling to find enough players to make up a 13-man squad.

Still they kept going, and, along the way exacted sweet revenge against Adelaide

# BRISBANE STRIKERS

City when they humiliated them 7-1 at Suncorp Stadium in the ultimate payback.

Needless to say, the Brisbane Strikers are an immensely dangerous team on their day. They are well organised, with a rock solid defence, more than competent attack, a great blend of youth and experience and some truly quality performers such as Jason Polak, Alan Hunter, Danny Wright, Mark Battistin, Gary Phillips, the Cranney brothers, Clint Bolton and of course, Farina. ●

Queensland.

The men behind the Brisbane Strikers, Ian Brusasco and Alan Vessey, knew what they were doing when they targeted Farina as the man they wanted to help put the team on the football map.

That they managed to stave off big money offers from his old club, Marconi Fairfield speaks volumes for their tenacity and determination to get their man.

And Farina has not let them down.

Not only has he improved the club's image in the media and with the wider Queensland sporting community, but he has also helped give them new-found confidence on the field with a string of five-star performances and superb goals.

His combination with strike partner Rod Brown has reaped its rewards up front.

And he has also introduced a new level of professionalism at training, inspiring his teammates to lift their game on and off the field.

## Brisbane Strikers' record against the other semi-finalists this season:

v Marconi Fairfield lost 1-3 at Suncorp Stadium  
v West Adelaide lost 0-1 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Sydney United lost 0-1 at Sydney United Sports Centre  
v Melbourne Knights lost 0-2 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre  
v Adelaide City lost 0-7 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v UTS Olympic lost 0-1 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Marconi Fairfield won 2-1 at Marconi Stadium  
v West Adelaide won 3-1 at Suncorp Stadium  
v Sydney United won 4-0 at Suncorp Stadium  
v Melbourne Knights drew 0-0 at Suncorp Stadium  
v Adelaide City won 7-1 at Suncorp Stadium  
v UTS Olympic won 3-1 at Suncorp Stadium  
v Marconi Fairfield drew 1-1 at Suncorp Stadium  
v West Adelaide lost 0-3 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Sydney United lost 0-1 at Sydney United Sports Centre  
v Melbourne Knights lost 0-2 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre  
v Adelaide City drew 0-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v UTS Olympic at Leichhardt Oval

◀ **BRISBANE STRIKERS** celebrate another goal scored at their Suncorp Stadium

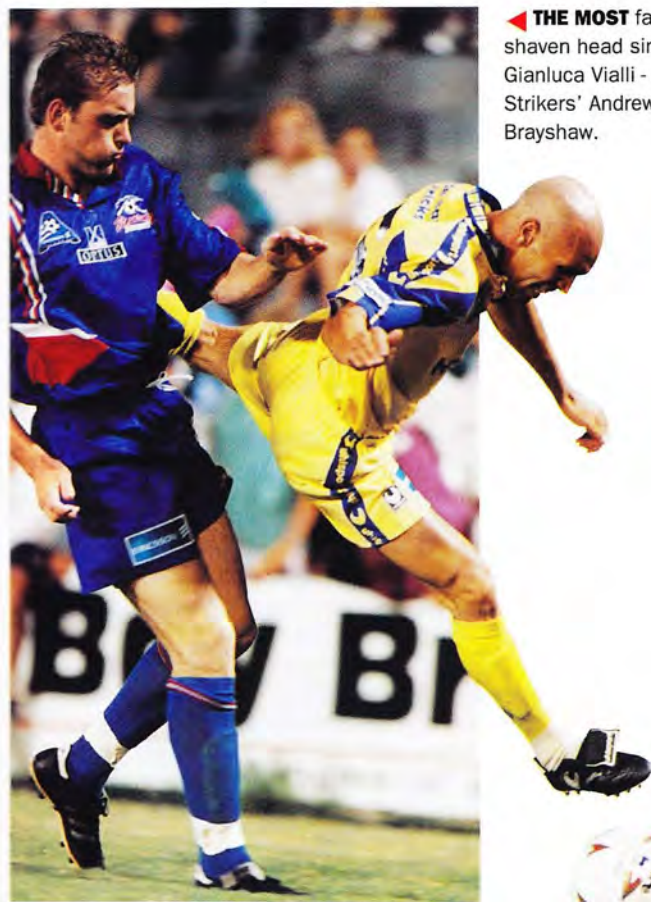


No. of previous finals series: 0

## Players' finals records

No.	Name	Previous finals	W	D	L	Goals
1	Clint BOLTON	—	—	—	—	—
2	Chris ZORICICH	—	—	—	—	—
3	Craig WILLIAMS	—	—	—	—	—
4	Alan HUNTER	7	1	4	2	1
5	Steve JACKSON	2	1	0	1	0
6	Gary PHILLIPS	19	11	0	8	4
7	Frank FARINA	9	5	1	3	5
8	Jason POLAK	12	5	1	6	1
9	Rod BROWN	7	1	3	3	1
10	Danny WRIGHT	11	3	3	5	2
11	Troy CRANNEY	—	—	—	—	—
13	Brad DITTON	—	—	—	—	—
14	Sean CRANNEY	—	—	—	—	—
15	Andrew BRAYSHAW	—	—	—	—	—
16	Chay HEWS	—	—	—	—	—
17	Glenn GWYNNE	—	—	—	—	—
18	Mark BATTISTIN	—	—	—	—	—
19	Reece TOLLENAERE	—	—	—	—	—
20	Graham ROSS	—	—	—	—	—
21	Andrew PACKER	—	—	—	—	—
22	Kasey WEHRMAN	—	—	—	—	—
30	Robert EDWARDS	—	—	—	—	—

**COACH** Bruce Stowell, **ASSISTANT COACH** Peter Bannon, **PHYSIOS** Michael Daiglish, Rob Thams, Matt Freke, Martin Coote, **GEAR STEWARD** Ian Dalzell, **TRAINERS** Stan Skubis, Graham Kinsela, **CLUB PRESIDENT** Ian Brusasco AM, **GENERAL/ADMINISTRATION MANAGER** Alan Vessey, **DIRECTORS** Clem Jones AO, Frank Speare.



◀ **THE MOST** famous shaven head since Gianluca Vialli - Brisbane Strikers' Andrew Brayshaw.



Frank Farina and Brisbane Strikers' team-mate

Alan Hunter still argue about it. The former Coca-Cola Socceroo great swears the big defender brings up the subject every second day.

But, despite all of Hunter's urging, pleading and demands, Farina still smiles and refuses to allow his mate to exorcise the demons that have haunted him and the rest of the Sydney United players since 1988.

The cause of Hunter's despair goes back to the epic Grand Final between Farina's old club Marconi Fairfield and Sydney United, who boasted such great players as Graham Arnold, Robbie Slater, Hunter, Wally Savor, Vedran Rozic and Graham Jennings.

Anyone lucky enough to be at Parramatta on that balmy, Sunday afternoon will never forget a match that will go down as one of the classics of Australian club soccer.

What a game! It had twists and turns and drama and controversy from the moment referee Chris Bambridge blew his whistle for the start.

And, not surprisingly, Farina was involved in the thick of the action, including the telling moment in the dying minutes of extra time when Sydney United led Marconi Fairfield 2-1 and seemed destined for their first championship.

But, with time ticking away, Zlatko Nasteovski sent Farina away on a run towards the penalty area. As he neared the box Mark Jones came across. There was a bump of two bodies and Farina went sprawling to the turf.

Penalty!

After much arguing and arm waving from the Sydney United players, Nasteovski took the spot kick and it was 2-2. The resultant penalty shoot-out is history. Tony Henderson knocked in the final kick of the shoot-out to give Marconi Fairfield the title and a fairytale ending.

For Farina it was to be his last game in Australian club soccer before he moved overseas for what was to be a fine career.

"Alan is still arguing that I took a dive that day, but I keep telling him to look at the record books," Farina quipped. "He pleads with me to say I dived. I just say Chris Bambridge made the right decision and it infuriates the big fella."

Jokes aside, Farina has fond memories of that Grand Final success and hopes to add another finals chapter to his illustrious career.

"I know some people have written us off, but I honestly believe we are as capable of winning the title as any of the other five teams in the six."

Farina points to Brisbane Strikers' quality squad, which boasts plenty of experience at both club and international level.

"We've got good depth and players who know what it takes to win the important matches. The rest is up to us."

"It's what everyone has been working for all season," he added. "Now we have a sniff we are not about to throw it away." ●







**Coach:** Manfred Schaefer

**Years in national league:** 1977 to 1995-96

**Championships:** 1979, 1988, 1988-89, 1992-93

**Runners-up:** 1977, 1989-90 **Finalists:** 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989-90, 1990-91, 1992-93, 1993-94

When you talk about the end-of-season finals and, in particular the Grand Final, one club

name continues to come up almost religiously... Marconi Fairfield.

Along with Adelaide City, they have been the dominant force in Australian soccer since the Ericsson Cup went to the highly successful

Along the way he made some tough decisions, like telling stalwarts like Ian Gray and Tommy McCulloch that they were no longer a part of the club's plans.

Schaefer's effort in shaping a new-look squad with as many as 10 new faces into a formidable outfit deserves the highest praise.

It would not have been easy blending in new players like Francis Awaritefe, Matthew Bingley, Robert Stanton, Brad Maloney, Eric Hristodoulou, Dominic Longo, Paul Souris and Vlado Zoric to name a few.

Of course, they have had their bumpy moments and there were times when the team just did not click and struggled to win matches, often being helped by large slices of luck.

Despite that, they never despaired nor deviated from the plan set by Schaefer. Gradually they got their act together and, really, it was no fluke that the Stallions either led or narrowly trailed the pace for the entire season.

Marconi Fairfield's preliminary season success has been built on a consistent goalscoring record and a steady defence which had its share of moments.

In Andy Harper and the irrepressible and extrovert Awaritefe, the Stallions have a forward line capable of putting fear into the hearts of most defences.

Despite playing together for the first time, they seemed to click almost immediately.

However, the addition of Coca-Cola Socceroo Dominic Longo in the defence was probably the most telling feature for Marconi Fairfield.

Depth has also been an able ally of Marconi Fairfield. With such a long season, it was important to be able to cover most positions and this is where Marconi Fairfield have such an advantage over the other clubs. •

finals concept in 1988 to determine the champions.

With three titles from four grand final appearances in eight seasons, it is hardly surprising the Stallions are again well in the running for yet another title this season.

Mind you, they were due to produce the goods following two nightmarish seasons in 1993-94 and 1994-95.

Having said that, there were doubts in a number of quarters about the club's ability to regroup this season and become fierce challengers for the title.

With a new coach in Manfred Schaefer and a heavy emphasis on team rebuilding it was considered Marconi Fairfield would need a season before hauling themselves back into the limelight.

But, through Schaefer's hard work and drive, the full backing of the Marconi Fairfield board and some astute off-season buys, the club is well and truly back in the big picture.

Always a tough task master, Schaefer, a former Coca-Cola Socceroo great, instilled a new sense of belief, commitment and good, old fashioned discipline, in a club which had somehow lost its way on the football field.

### Marconi Fairfield's record against the other semi-finalists this season:

- v Brisbane Strikers won 3-1 at Suncorp Stadium
- v Melbourne Knights lost 0-2 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v Adelaide City won 2-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium
- v UTS Olympic drew 0-0 at Leichhardt Oval
- v Sydney United drew 1-1 at Marconi Stadium
- v West Adelaide won 3-1 at Marconi Stadium
- v Brisbane Strikers lost 1-2 at Marconi Stadium
- v Melbourne Knights drew 0-0 at Marconi Stadium
- v Adelaide City won 4-2 at Marconi Stadium
- v UTS Olympic lost 1-3 at Marconi Stadium
- v Sydney United won 3-1 at Marconi Stadium
- v West Adelaide lost 0-1 at Hindmarsh Stadium
- v Brisbane Strikers drew 1-1 at Suncorp Stadium
- v Melbourne Knights drew 0-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v Adelaide City lost 0-3 at Hindmarsh Stadium
- v UTS Olympic lost 1-2 at Leichhardt Oval
- v Sydney United drew 1-1 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v West Adelaide at Marconi Stadium



# DOMINIC LONGO



## No. of previous finals series: 9

(1984, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1989-90, 1990-91, 1992-93, 1993-94)

Location	P	W	D	L	F	A
In Sydney	20	9	5	6	38	29
Elsewhere	3	2	0	1	3	2
Total	23	11	6	7	41	31
<b>Biggest Home Win</b>	7-0 v South Melbourne, 1993					
<b>Biggest Away Win</b>	2-1 v South Melbourne, 1988					
<b>Heaviest Home Loss</b>	0-2 v UTS Olympic, 1990					
<b>Heaviest Away Loss</b>	0-1 v Adelaide City, 1991					

## Finals history against other 1995-96 finals teams

Finals opponent	P	W	D	L	F	A
Adelaide City	3	1	—	2	2	4
Brisbane Strikers	—	—	—	—	—	—
Melbourne Knights	1	1	—	—	1	0
Sydney United	2	1	1	—	3	2
UTS Olympic	8	3	1	4	13	13
West Adelaide	—	—	—	—	—	—

## Players' finals records

No.	Name	Previous finals	W	D	L	Goals
1	Bob CATLIN	10	6	2	2	0
2	Gary VAN EGMOND	8	5	0	3	1
3	Jean Paul DE MARIGNY	15	7	3	5	3
4	Robert STANTON	5	2	1	2	0
5	Matthew BINGLEY	9	5	0	4	0
6	Luke CASSERLY	—	—	—	—	—
7	Andrew HARPER	9	5	0	4	4
8	Eric HRISTODOULOU	7	4	1	2	0
9	Ramon CLIMENT	—	—	—	—	—
10	Brad MALONEY	2	1	0	1	1
11	Mike SMITH	4	1	0	3	0
12	John ANGELUCCI	—	—	—	—	—
13	Aaron HOLST	—	—	—	—	—
14	Nick BOSEVSKI	—	—	—	—	—
16	Darren McDONALD	—	—	—	—	—
17	Francis AWARITEFE	19	5	5	9	5
18	Paul SOURIS	2	1	0	1	0
19	Brendan RENAUD	—	—	—	—	—
20	Leslie POGLIACOMI	—	—	—	—	—
21	Andrew RAVANELLO	—	—	—	—	—
22	Dominic LONGO	—	—	—	—	—
23	Vlado ZORIC	—	—	—	—	—

**COACH** Manfred Schaefer, **GOALKEEPING COACH** Nick Sokoloff,  
**PHYSIO** Joe Miragliani, **GEAR STEWARD** Dino Zanella,  
**CLUB PRESIDENT** Tony Labbozzetta,  
**GENERAL/ADMINISTRATION MANAGER** Frank Labbozzetta

On the football fields of Belgium he earned the complimentary nickname "The Animal". Off the pitch he is often described as "Mr Nice Guy".

If the rather startling contradiction in descriptions upsets highly regarded Coca-Cola Socceroo and Marconi Fairfield defender Dominic Longo, then he does a good job of hiding it.

Longo is one of those rare breed of sportspeople. You know, the easy going, placid ones who can all of a sudden be transformed into ferocious tigers once they take the arena, no matter what sport it might be.

He's the sort of guy Custer would have liked to have had next to him during the Last Stand at Little Big Horn.

Marconi Fairfield have certainly appreciated Longo's presence in the central defence for he has been the rock on which the club's success has been built this season.

And no-one knows it more than coach Manfred Schaefer. When Longo came back to town after three seasons in Belgium with Cercle Brugge, Schaefer pursued him with the zest of a man chasing a tank full of \$100 notes.

Longo hadn't played in the national competition since the 1991-92 season with Newcastle Breakers and said he had a point to prove when he got back to Australia.

He didn't say it but it must have been at the back of his mind that some followers of the game doubted his ability.

"I don't know about that," he said. "Look, I just wanted to show everyone that I hadn't changed as a person or player."

"I wanted to do my best this season for myself and Marconi Fairfield and the fans."

Longo's good fortune this season is well deserved for the low points have dominated his recent career.

It all started well enough when he had a terrific debut season with Cercle Brugge, who pounced to sign him after his superb tournament with the Coca-Cola Olyroos at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona.

Longo was voted in the top 10 foreigners in Belgium and, was included in the Coca-Cola Socceroo squad for the World Cup qualifiers in 1993.

But things turned sour in the following two seasons. He did not see eye to eye with club management, who preferred to sign a number of overseas players which meant there were too many foreigners on their books.

Longo hardly got a look in and eventually asked to be released from his contract and headed home to Australia.

Now that he has regained his burning passion for the game, Longo is again determined to give Europe another go.

"That's the plan at this stage," he said. "But, as they say, soccer is a funny game."

"I've received a letter from a club in Belgium and it looks promising. But we'll have to wait and see."

In the meantime, Longo will be just as happy to be playing in a national league finals series for the first time.

"I've never even been close to making one, so this will be something to savour, especially with the prospect it could be my last season in the league if I go overseas again." •







## MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

and emotional scenes that followed Melbourne Knights' historic 2-0 win over Adelaide City in last season's Grand Final in front of a sell-out crowd at Hindmarsh Stadium?

Rejoicing players clambered up one, tall wire fence separating the fans from the field, while others embraced each other as jubilant Melbourne Knights officials raced around like chooks with their heads chopped off.

So often the bridesmaid, never the bride, the

**Coach:** Ian Dobson

**Years in national league:** 1984 to 1995-96

**Championships:** 1994-95

**Runners-up:** 1990-91, 1991-92, 1993-94 **Finalists:** 1986, 1989, 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92, 1993-94, 1994-95

Who will ever forget the remarkable

Horvat it was little wonder.

The Melbourne Knights, it was said, would especially feel the loss of sharpshooter Viduka, twice leading goalscorer of the national league. To some extent they were right with the Melbourne Knights struggling to score goals.

But, apart from a hiccup here and there, they have been in devastating form in the latter part of the season, zooming into calculations for the minor premiership.

And they have had to do it against a backdrop of injuries, suspensions, national and Olympic duties and a mid-season change of coach.

Mirko Bazic, who guided the club to tremendous success in two seasons had succumbed to illness and home sickness and decided to return home to Croatia in January.

In stepped Ian Dobson.

Dobson was in a no-win situation when he took over but he has handled the job professionally and, along

the way, has won an army of admirers.

The Melbourne Knights have been the form team of the third round, producing a number of superb results which have had the other teams looking over their shoulders. •

### Melbourne Knights' record against the other semi-finalists this season:

- v UTS Olympic lost 0-1 at Marconi Stadium
- v Marconi Fairfield won 2-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v West Adelaide drew 1-1 at Hindmarsh Stadium
- v Brisbane Strikers won 2-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v Sydney United lost 0-2 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v Adelaide City drew 2-2 at Hindmarsh Stadium
- v UTS Olympic lost 0-1 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v Marconi Fairfield drew 0-0 at Marconi Stadium
- v West Adelaide won 2-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v Brisbane Strikers drew 0-0 at Suncorp Stadium
- v Sydney United drew 0-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v Adelaide City lost 0-1 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v UTS Olympic won 2-0 at Leichhardt Oval
- v Marconi Fairfield drew 0-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v West Adelaide lost 0-1 at Hindmarsh Stadium
- v Brisbane Strikers won 2-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v Sydney United won 4-2 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v Adelaide City lost 0-5 at Hindmarsh Stadium

Melbourne Knights finally stood at the altar in their own right to claim what was rightfully theirs after four seasons of heartbreak.

If you are a Melbourne Knights fan you don't need to be reminded of the trauma and despair the club had gone through before triumphant captain Andrew Marth finally got his hands on the championship trophy.

It started in the 1990-91 season when they were beaten in a penalty shoot-out by South Melbourne. The following season they were again beaten in a penalty shoot-out by Adelaide City before Damian Mori scored a memorable goal to defy them a third time in the 1993-94 season.

But, now the monkey is off their back, can they claim back-to-back titles? You wouldn't want to bet against it.

Not surprisingly, there were some who were willing to say the Melbourne

Knights could not make it back-to-back. And, given the loss of the likes of Mark Viduka and Steve





No. of previous finals series: **7**

(1986, 1989, 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92, 1993-94, 1994-95)

Location	P	W	D	L	F	A
In Melbourne	14	5	5	4	19	17
Elsewhere	4	1	0	3	3	4
Total	18	6	5	7	22	21

**Biggest Home Win** 2-0 v Preston, 1989**Biggest Away Win** 2-0 v Adelaide City, 1995**Heaviest Home Loss** 0-1 v Adelaide City, 1994**Heaviest Away Loss** 1-2 v UTS Olympic, 1990Finals history against other **1995-96** finals teams

Finals opponent	P	W	D	L	F	A
Adelaide City	5	1	1	3	3	4
Brisbane Strikers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marconi Fairfield	1	-	-	1	0	1
Sydney United	-	-	-	-	-	-
UTS Olympic	2	-	-	2	3	5
West Adelaide	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Players' finals records

No.	Name	Previous finals	W	D	L	Goals
1	Frank JURIC	4	2	0	2	0
2	Vinko BULJUBASIC	7	3	1	3	0
3	Fausto DE AMICIS	7	3	1	3	1
4	David CERVINSKI	7	3	1	3	0
5	Zoran MARKOVSKI	1	0	0	1	0
6	Andrew MARTH	12	3	4	5	2
8	Josip SIMUNIC	-	-	-	-	-
9	Joe SPITERI	3	1	0	2	1
10	Ljubo LAPANSKY	3	1	0	2	0
11	Oliver PONDELJAK	8	3	2	3	0
12	Ice KUTLESOVSKI	-	-	-	-	-
13	Damian VOJTEK	-	-	-	-	-
14	Daniel TIATTO	4	2	0	2	1
15	Krunoslav RAZOV	-	-	-	-	-
16	Ante KOVACEVIC	2	2	0	0	0
17	John MARKOVSKI	10	1	2	7	2
18	Adrian CERVINSKI	3	1	1	1	2
19	Damian GRGANOVIC	-	-	-	-	-
20	Vilson KNEZEVIC	-	-	-	-	-
21	Dragi NASTEVSKI	-	-	-	-	-
22	Damlr MOVRIC	-	-	-	-	-
23	Branko BACAK	-	-	-	-	-
24	Tom PONDELJAK	-	-	-	-	-
25	Joe BACAK	-	-	-	-	-



If tearaway Melbourne Knights striker Tommy Pondeljak wasn't a soccer player, he could quite easily have been a Stawell Gift sprinter.

Arguably as quick as Melbourne Knights team-mate Danny Tiatto, Tommy's long black hair is about the only thing that slows him down as he races up and down the pitch.

The 20-year-old has been a revelation in his rookie year and has been one of the main reasons why the defending champions have been able to cover the loss of stars Mark Viduka and Steve Horvat.

He is one of the fine Melbourne Knights youngsters, along with sweeper Joe Simunic, Ice Kutlesovski, and marksman Joe Spiteri, who have rallied to the cause in the club's title defence.

Tommy says he inherited his speed from his mother Dragica who was a talented athlete at school in Croatia.

Speedster Tommy didn't want to say who was faster between him and Tiatto but did say he had often been asked the question.

"Danny was incredible in his first season last year and I've just tried to take notice of the way he plays," Pondeljak said. "Along the way I have learnt some things from him."

Tommy has had an outstanding season as striker but has also been used by coach Ian Dobson as a midfielder and an attacking right back when Vinko Buljubasic has been sidelined.

The 20-year-old said he hasn't found the transition from state league to national league ranks all that difficult but concedes he has encountered higher quality opponents.

Earlier this year, he won the Gold Medal for leading player with the Victorian league club St Albans before following older brother Ollie to the Melbourne Knights.

"He (Ollie) obviously made it at the Melbourne Knights before me. Everyone expected me to follow in his footsteps so the pressure was on me right from the start," said Tommy, who has played soccer since the age of six.

The lightly-built youngster admits the weight of expectations of Melbourne Knights' fans had affected him in some home games at the Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre.

Tommy, who interestingly has scored most of his goals away from Melbourne, consistently provided heartbreak for Melbourne Knights' fans when he got into wonderful scoring positions, only to squander easy shots.

"Playing at home you want to score to keep the fans happy but I have probably put pressure on myself and haven't composed myself in front of goal when I've had chances," Tommy said.

"Ian (Dobson) was saying to me not to worry because I'm still learning.

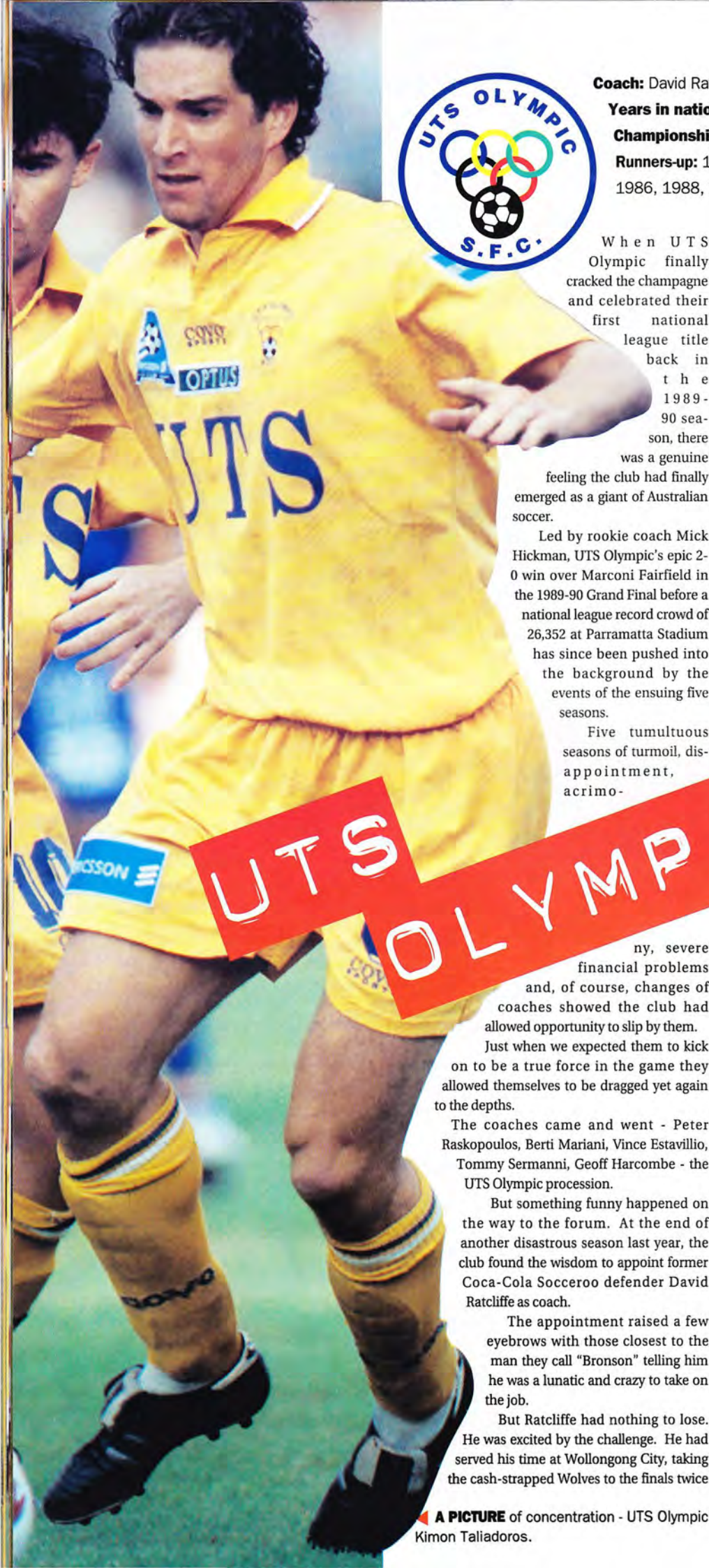
"He was happy that I was making position and creating chances and said they (the goals) would eventually come and fortunately they have."

Tommy, who has missed only 10 matches this season, said he wasn't ready yet to try his talent overseas and wanted to play at least one more season in the Ericsson Cup.

"There is a lot of young talent out there but it is a matter of establishing yourself at a club first before starting to think about anything else," said Pondeljak. •

COACH Ian Dobson, ASSISTANT COACH Sveto Rastocic, TRAINER Benny Luo,  
GEAR STEWARD Mirko Rastocic, PHYSIO David Bergin, DOCTOR Dr Zeljko Lovric,  
CLUB PRESIDENT Andjelko Cimer, GENERAL MANAGER Mirko Cugura





**Coach:** David Ratcliffe

**Years in national league:** 1977 to 1979, 1981 to 1995-96

**Championships:** 1989-90

**Runners-up:** 1984, 1986, 1989 **Finalists:** 1984, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1989-90, 1991-92, 1993-94

When UTS Olympic finally cracked the champagne and celebrated their first national league title back in

the

1989-

90 season,

there

was a genuine

feeling the club had finally emerged as a giant of Australian soccer.

Led by rookie coach Mick Hickman, UTS Olympic's epic 2-0 win over Marconi Fairfield in the 1989-90 Grand Final before a national league record crowd of 26,352 at Parramatta Stadium has since been pushed into the background by the events of the ensuing five seasons.

Five tumultuous seasons of turmoil, disappointment, acrimo-

ny, severe

financial problems

and, of course, changes of coaches showed the club had allowed opportunity to slip by them.

Just when we expected them to kick on to be a true force in the game they allowed themselves to be dragged yet again to the depths.

The coaches came and went - Peter Raskopoulos, Berti Mariani, Vince Estavillio, Tommy Sermanni, Geoff Harcombe - the UTS Olympic procession.

But something funny happened on the way to the forum. At the end of another disastrous season last year, the club found the wisdom to appoint former Coca-Cola Socceroo defender David Ratcliffe as coach.

The appointment raised a few eyebrows with those closest to the man they call "Bronson" telling him he was a lunatic and crazy to take on the job.

But Ratcliffe had nothing to lose.

He was excited by the challenge. He had served his time at Wollongong City, taking the cash-strapped Wolves to the finals twice

in six seasons.

We can now see that he and UTS Olympic both knew what they were doing.

To say Ratcliffe has turned the club around on the field is an understatement. He has transformed it from a rabble to a true championship contender.

And don't the fans love it.

There are no better supporters in the game - when their club is winning - than the UTS Olympic people. They have flocked to Leichhardt Oval to watch the Blues and have travelled on the away trips. The Ericsson Cup crowd figures are up and we know why.

Apart for a hiccup in the middle of the third round, UTS Olympic have been one of the high-flyers of the championship this season.

Ratcliffe has brought a sense of purpose and pride to the club and it has shown out on the field more than once this season.

How many times have UTS Olympic been down and out this season, only to come back in the second half or the last 15 minutes of the game to snatch a draw or a win?

That would never have happened in the past.

Ratcliffe has moulded a fine team of triers, goers and talent.

Kris Trajanovski has been a consistent goalscorer and can't be far off a berth with the Coca-Cola Socceroos while Norman Tome, Nick Meredith, Kimon Taliadoros,

Milan Blagojevic, Peter Tsekenis, Walter Ardone, David Barrett and the immensely underrated Adam Ciantar have benefited from Ratcliffe's coaching. •

### UTS Olympic's record against the other semi-finalists this season:

v Melbourne Knights won 1-0 at Marconi Stadium  
v Adelaide City won 1-0 at Marconi Stadium  
v Sydney United drew 2-2 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Marconi Fairfield drew 0-0 at Leichhardt Oval  
v West Adelaide lost 1-3 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Brisbane Strikers won 1-0 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Melbourne Knights won 1-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre  
v Adelaide City drew 0-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Sydney United won 2-1 at Sydney United Sports Centre  
v Marconi Fairfield won 3-1 at Marconi Stadium  
v West Adelaide won 3-2 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Brisbane Strikers lost 1-3 at Suncorp Stadium  
v Melbourne Knights lost 0-3 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Adelaide City drew 1-1 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Sydney United won 1-0 at Leichhardt Oval  
v Marconi Fairfield won 2-1 at Leichhardt Oval  
v West Adelaide lost 2-3 at Hindmarsh Stadium  
v Brisbane Strikers at Leichhardt Oval

▲ A PICTURE of concentration - UTS Olympic's Kimon Taliadoros.



No. of previous finals series: **8**

(1984, 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1989-90, 1991-92, 1993-94)

Location	P	W	D	L	F	A
In Sydney	22	11	2	9	31	33
Elsewhere	4	3	0	1	6	4
Total	26	14	2	10	37	37
Biggest Home Win	3-0 v APIA-Leichhardt, 1984					
Biggest Away Win	1-0 v South Melbourne, 1990					
Heaviest Home Loss	1-3 Adelaide City, 1986					
Heaviest Away Loss	1-2 v South Melbourne, 1984					



Milan Blagojevic has achieved a great deal in his football career, but, until this season, he admits there had been a missing link.

Incredibly, the UTS Olympic and Coca-Cola Socceroo sweeper-midfielder revealed he has never played in a semi-final series in the national league.

"I don't know what it is like to be in the finals," he quipped. "I haven't even played in a Cup final let alone the playoffs."

Is it any wonder then that when he joined UTS at the start of the season he set himself one goal – to help the club reach the finals and fill the void in a terrific career.

"That was something I really thought about at the start of the season," Blagojevic said. "It was a personal goal I was determined to make come true."

For Blagojevic, it has been a case of several times so near yet so far. He has tasted the bitter pill of failure more than once.

He painfully recalls his days with Apia Leichhardt under Manfred Schaefer during 1989-90 when the club was in the top two or three for most of the season before falling to pieces when it counted most.

"We ended up dropping our bundle and finishing sixth, just one spot out of the five," he said. "I then went to Marconi the following season and we also finished sixth."

At the end of that season Blagojevic went overseas and tried his luck with Ekeren in Belgium before moving to Heerenveen in Holland.

Injuries and several other problems conspired to see that he spent two wasted years overseas barely playing any games before his club decided to allow him to return to Australia.

Blagojevic, who is still contracted to Heerenveen, started training with Parramatta Eagles but was then picked up by David Ratcliffe for UTS Olympic when the Eagles were relegated from the competition.

In the end, it was probably the best thing that could have happened to him as UTS Olympic has been one of the revelations of this season's Ericsson Cup.

"I've really enjoyed the season," he said. "Just being able to avoid injuries and play regularly has really lifted my confidence and spirit."

Blagojevic, still only 26, has been one of the team's star performers and his experience at sweeper and occasionally midfield, has been a real bonus for Ratcliffe.

"There is a good atmosphere at the club. We have shown some real character in a lot of games we weren't entitled to win," he said. "That is something that will hold us in good stead in the finals." •

Finals history against other **1995-96** finals teams

Finals opponent	P	W	D	L	F	A
Adelaide City	4	2	–	2	5	6
Brisbane Strikers	–	–	–	–	–	–
Marconi Fairfield	8	4	1	3	13	13
Melbourne Knights	2	2	–	–	5	3
Sydney United	1	1	–	–	4	3
West Adelaide	–	–	–	–	–	–

Players' finals **records**

No.	Name	Previous finals	W	D	L	Goals
1	Mike GIBSON	5	2	0	3	0
2	David BARRETT	13	7	0	6	0
3	Adam CIANTAR	–	–	–	–	–
4	Derek POIMER	–	–	–	–	–
5	George SORRAS	2	1	0	1	0
6	Peter TSEKENIS	2	1	0	1	0
7	George VALAS	–	–	–	–	–
8	Kimon TALIADOROS	16	7	3	6	3
9	Norman TOME	2	1	0	1	0
10	Chris SLATER	–	–	–	–	–
11	Kris TRAJANOVSKI	2	1	0	1	1
12	Walter ARDONE	–	–	–	–	–
13	Raphael BOVE	–	–	–	–	–
14	Elias AUGERINOS	2	1	0	1	0
15	Nick MEREDITH	3	1	0	2	0
16	Robert IRONSIDE	11	6	0	5	0
17	Milan BLAGOJEVIC	–	–	–	–	–
18	Scott BAILLIE	–	–	–	–	–
19	Con PARADISIS	–	–	–	–	–
20	George BOUHOUTSOS	–	–	–	–	–
21	Carlos GONZALES	–	–	–	–	–
22	Ivan ZELIC	–	–	–	–	–
23	Alistair EDWARDS	8	6	0	2	1

**COACH** David Ratcliffe, **ASSISTANT COACH** Steve Darby, **TRAINER** Chris Ninopoulos,  
**GEAR STEWARD** Ray Gerrie, **CLUB SECRETARY** Tom Doumanis,  
**DIRECTORS** John Manis, Lex Marinos, **CLUB PRESIDENT** Jim Kelaiditis,  
**GENERAL/ADMINISTRATION MANAGER** Lydia Dowse





**Coach:** Branko Culina

**Years in national league:** 1984 to 1995-96

**Championships:** nil

**Runners-up:** 1988

**Finalists:** 1985, 1986, 1988, 1993-94, 1994-95

Frustrating... that's probably the best way to describe a season which started full

of promise and hope but turned into "what might have been" for Sydney United.

Seriously, who would want to be a coach?

Poor Branko Culina. Watching him on the bench this season and talking to him after yet another game of missed opportunities one gets a real insight into the agony and sheer pain of being a coach.

Too often he saw his team play good football and dominate their opposition, only to fritter away golden scoring opportunities then suffer the ulti-

they made it past the first stage, only to fall to South Melbourne in a controversial game at Marconi Stadium.

This season has been one of ups and downs for the club. They had a poor start to the season before coming into their own from round six.

Sydney United have been thereabouts for most of the season, though they have suffered because of a lack of consistency - and goals.

Their defence, however, has been superb - as you would expect with the likes of Tony Popovic, Mark Babic and Vel Kupresak in the back line.

However, the loss of goalkeeper Zeljko Kalac to England has been hard to overcome. John Perosh and young Andrew Crews have jostled for the position for most of the season with both having good and bad spells.

No doubt Culina and the club will

**SYDNEY UNITED**

have learned from the experiences of the last couple of seasons. The players now know what it takes to be in the finals.

Certainly, with talent like Popovic, Babic, Kupresak, Paul Bilokapic, Ante Moric, Robert Enes, David Zdrilic and Manis Lamond, the club is well placed to cast aside the bitter memories.

We know they can play good football, and we know they now have the finals experience.

It will, however, be a case of whether they can get their act together in front of goal which could be the difference between a successful season and another crushing disappointment.

### Sydney United's record against the other semi-finalists this season:

- v West Adelaide drew 0-0 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v Brisbane Strikers won 1-0 Sydney United Sports Centre
- v Melbourne Knights won 2-0 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v UTS Olympic drew 2-2 at Leichhardt Oval
- v Marconi Fairfield drew 1-1 at Marconi Stadium
- v Adelaide City drew 2-2 at Hindmarsh Stadium
- v West Adelaide won 1-0 at Hindmarsh Stadium
- v Brisbane Strikers lost 0-4 at Suncorp Stadium
- v Melbourne Knights drew 0-0 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v UTS Olympic lost 1-2 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v Marconi Fairfield lost 1-3 at Marconi Stadium
- v Adelaide City drew 2-2 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v West Adelaide won 3-0 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v Brisbane Strikers won 1-0 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v Melbourne Knights lost 2-4 at Melbourne Croatian Sports Centre
- v UTS Olympic lost 0-1 at Leichhardt Oval
- v Marconi Fairfield drew 1-1 at Sydney United Sports Centre
- v Adelaide City at Hindmarsh Stadium

◀ **SYDNEY UNITED** midfielder Ante Moric in action against South Melbourne.





## No. of previous finals series: 5

(1985, 1986, 1988, 1993-94, 1994-95)

Location	P	W	D	L	F	A
In Sydney	10	2	2	6	9	17
Elsewhere	2	1	1	0	2	1
Total	12	3	3	6	11	18
Biggest Home Win	2-1 v South Melbourne, 1988					
Biggest Away Win	1-0 v Adelaide City, 1994					
Heaviest Home Loss	0-3 v St George, 1986					
Heaviest Away Loss	n/a					

## Finals history against other 1995-96 finals teams

Finals opponent	P	W	D	L	F	A
Adelaide City	2	1	-	1	1	2
Brisbane Strikers	-	-	-	-	-	-
Marconi Fairfield	2	-	1	1	2	3
Melbourne Knights	-	-	-	-	-	-
UTS Olympic	1	-	-	1	3	4
West Adelaide	2	1	1	-	2	1

## Players' finals records

No.	Name	Previous finals	W	D	L	Goals
1	John PEROSH	-	-	-	-	-
2	Robert TRAJKOVSKI	-	-	-	-	-
3	Velimir KUPRESAK	5	2	1	2	0
4	Tony POPOVIC	5	2	1	2	0
5	Mark BABIC	5	2	1	2	0
6	Robert ENES	-	-	-	-	-
8	Ante MORIC	5	2	1	2	1
9	Robert MARKOVAC	-	-	-	-	-
10	Ante MILICIC	3	1	1	1	1
11	Dominic USALJ	-	-	-	-	-
12	Mark RUDAN	-	-	-	-	-
13	Jim PATIKAS	5	2	0	3	0
14	David ZDRILIC	5	2	1	2	0
15	Sean BABIC	-	-	-	-	-
16	Manis LAMOND	10	3	3	4	1
17	Paul BILOKAPIC	-	-	-	-	-
18	Richard PLESA	1	1	0	0	0
20	Andrew CREWS	-	-	-	-	-
21	James ASCHNER	-	-	-	-	-
22	Chad GIBSON	-	-	-	-	-



Cultured Sydney United and Coca-Cola Socceroo defender Tony Popovic would love nothing better than to lead his team to their first championship success in the Ericsson Cup.

For Popovic, more than anyone, knows that time is rapidly running out for him to share in every player's dream of winning a club championship.

The odds are the sweeper/central defender/midfielder will be playing his last games for Sydney United during the finals and what better way to finish off with a team which has been part of his footballing life for so long.

Popovic, as one would expect, has attracted a lot of attention from Europe with clubs such as English giants Leeds United and Scottish champions Glasgow Rangers keen to snare his superb talents.

And, after his five-star performance for Australia against Scotland recently, there is no doubt he will soon be displaying his considerable wares on the rich playing stage of Europe.

Not surprisingly, however, the well spoken, personable Coca-Cola Socceroo doesn't want to think about what might be in the future.

"What happens, happens," he said. "I'll let the club do all the talking. All I want to do is concentrate on the rest of the season."

"Sure, it would be great to play in Europe because it has been my ambition for a long time, but I am the sort of person who doesn't count on things."

For Popovic, there are more important things, like ensuring

Sydney United erase the bitter memories of past failures at the end-of-season playoffs.

Sydney United have been the perennial losers of the Ericsson Cup, having made numerous semi-final appearances. Sadly, all they have to show for it is a runners-up medal after being beaten in a classic Grand Final by Marconi Fairfield at Parramatta Stadium in 1988.

Sydney United led 2-1 with minutes to go in extra time before giving away a penalty to allow Marconi Fairfield to draw level. They then fell to pieces during the penalty shoot-out to hand Marconi Fairfield yet another title.

Popovic wasn't around in those days, but he has also felt the pain of succumbing in the finals, in each of the last two seasons..

He says he wants to win the title "more than anything else in the world".

"It would be a great way to finish with the club and there is no doubt the people here (at Sydney United) deserve to get some reward for what they have put into the game," he said.

With a little luck, Tony Popovic will end up a double winner - a championship medal and a lucrative overseas contract. ●

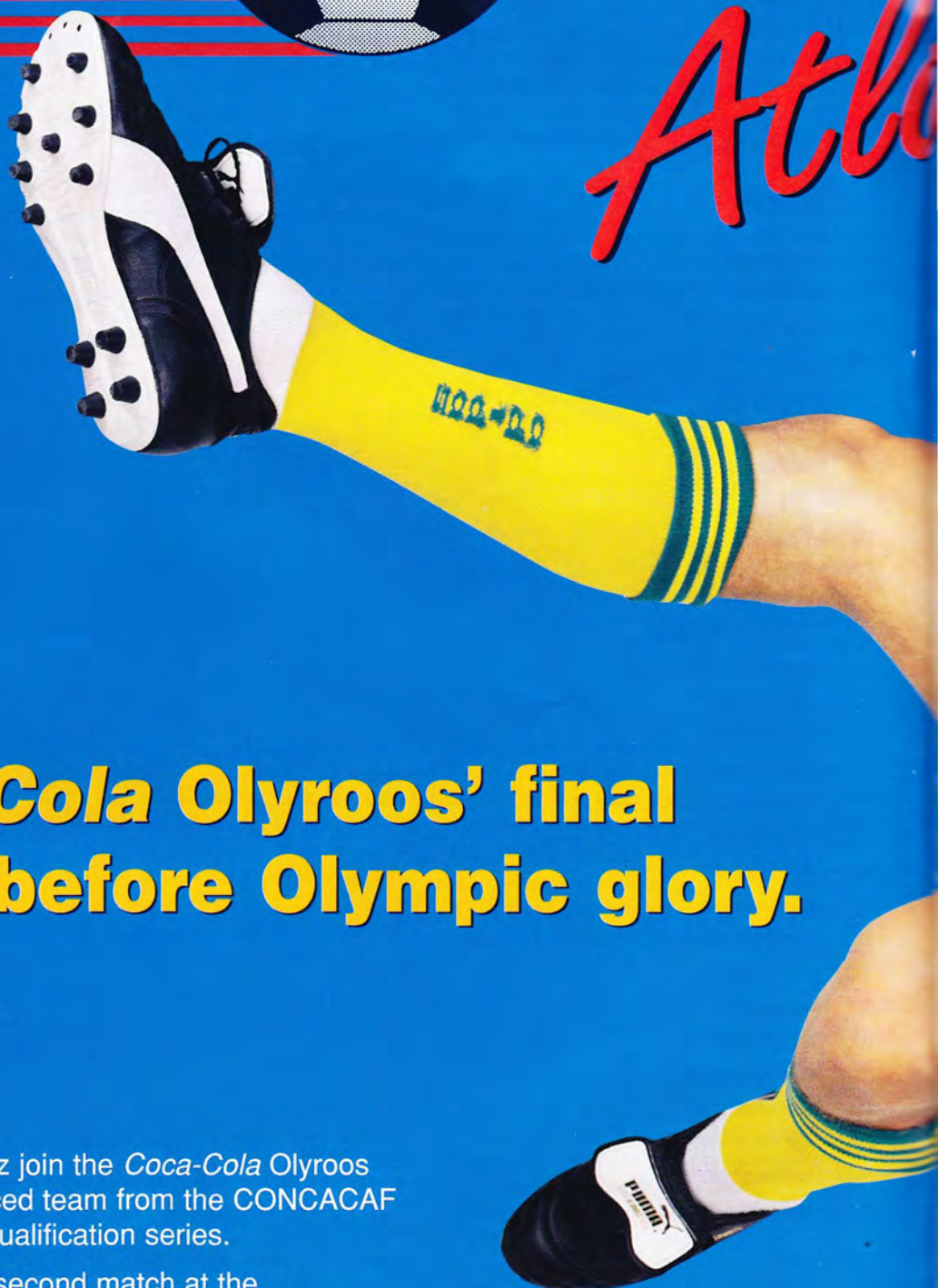
COACH Branko Culina, ASSISTANT COACH Steve Watson,  
TRAINER Stan Ivancic, GEAR STEWARD Dean Mifsud,  
CLUB PRESIDENT Ivan Simic, GENERAL/ADMINISTRATION MANAGER Ivan Elek



**Coca-Cola**  
**OLYROOS**



**Atlanta**



## **The Coca-Cola Olyroos' final challenge before Olympic glory.**

**Sydney Football Stadium**  
**Sunday, 2 June 1996**  
**Kick off 7.00pm**

See Viduka, Moore and Mendez join the *Coca-Cola* Olyroos when they play the second placed team from the CONCACAF Confederation in a two match qualification series.

Don't miss all the action of the second match at the Sydney Football Stadium in a game that will decide the final team for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Tickets available through Ticketek on **02 266 4800**



# anta Bound



SPONSORED BY THE COCA-COLA SYSTEM. 'COCA COLA', 'ALWAYS' AND THE ALWAYS LOGO ARE REGISTERED TRADE MARKS OF THE COCA-COLA COMPANY.



# ADELAIDE CITY SOCCER CLUB

**Sincerely thanks it's major  
sponsors for their support  
during the 1995/96 season**



**FOSTER'S**



**D'ORO  
DISTRIBUTORS**





# 1ST LEG

## MAJOR SEMI-FINAL

SUNDAY, 4 MAY

1996, 3PM

## MELBOURNE CROATIAN SPORTS CENTRE

### MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

- 1 Frank JURIC
- 2 Vinko BULJUBASIC
- 3 Fausto DE AMICIS
- 4 David CERVINSKI
- 5 Zoran MARKOVSKI
- 6 Andrew MARTH
- 8 Josip SIMUNIC
- 9 Joe SPITERI
- 10 Ljubo LAPSANSKY
- 11 Oliver PONDELJAK
- 12 Ice KUTLESOVSKI
- 13 Damian VOJTEK
- 14 Daniel TIATTO
- 15 Krunoslav RAZOV
- 16 Ante KOVACEVIC
- 17 John MARKOVSKI
- 18 Adrian CERVINSKI
- 19 Damian GRGANOVIC
- 20 Vilson KNEZEVIC
- 21 Dragi NASTEVSKE
- 22 Damir MOVRIC
- 23 Branko BACAK
- 24 Tom PONDELJAK
- 25 Joe BACAK

### MARCONI FAIRFIELD

- 1 Bob CATLIN
- 2 Gary VAN EGMOND
- 3 Jean Paul DE MARIGNY
- 4 Robert STANTON
- 5 Matthew BINGLEY
- 6 Luke CASSERLY
- 7 Andrew HARPER
- 8 Eric HRISTODOULOU
- 9 Ramon CLIMENT
- 10 Brad MALONEY
- 11 Mike SMITH
- 12 John ANGELUCCI
- 13 Aaron HOLST
- 14 Nick BOSEVSKI
- 16 Darren McDONALD
- 17 Francis AWARITEFE
- 18 Paul SOURIS
- 19 Brendan RENAUD
- 20 Leslie POGLIACOMI
- 21 Andrew RAVANELLO
- 22 Dominic LONGO
- 23 Vlado ZORIC

### PRELIMINARY SEMI-

FINAL SUNDAY, 4

MAY 1996, 8PM

## HINDMARSH STADIUM

### ADELAIDE CITY

- 1 Jason PETKOVIC
- 2 Sasa NEDELJKOVIC
- 3 Mark YATES
- 4 Milan IVANOVIC
- 5 Alex TOBIN
- 7 Damian MORI
- 8 Brad HASSELL
- 9 Joe MULLEN
- 10 John GIBSON
- 11 Goran LOZANOVSKI
- 12 Jamie PERIN
- 13 Angelo COSTANZO
- 14 Brad ARMOUR
- 15 Joel MARINO
- 16 Dino MENNILLO
- 17 Kosta SALAPASIDIS
- 18 Mark BRAZZALE
- 19 Craig FOSTER

- 20 Daniel MIGNANO
- 21 Michael PIRONE
- 22 Adrian LANDORIO
- 23 Matthew MOORE
- 24 Steven DEGIOVANNIELLO
- 25 Robert SARACENO
- 26 Nick BARBATO

### UTS OLYMPIC

- 1 Mike GIBSON
- 2 David BARRETT
- 3 Adam CIANTAR
- 4 Derek POIMER
- 5 George SORRAS
- 6 Peter TSEKENIS
- 7 George VALAS
- 8 Kimon TALIADOROS
- 9 Norman TOME
- 10 Chris SLATER
- 11 Kris TRAJANOVSKI
- 12 Walter ARDONE
- 13 Raphael BOVE
- 14 Elias AUGERINOS
- 15 Nick MEREDITH
- 16 Robert IRONSIDE
- 17 Milan BLAGOJEVIC
- 18 Scott BAILLIE
- 19 Con PARADISIS
- 20 George BOUHOUTSOS
- 21 Carlos GONZALES
- 22 Ivan ZELIC
- 23 Alistair EDWARDS

### PRELIMINARY SEMI-

FINAL SUNDAY, 4

MAY 1996, 6PM

## SYDNEY UNITED SPORTS CENTRE

### SYDNEY UNITED

- 1 John PEROSH
- 2 Robert TRAJKOVSKI
- 3 Velimir KUPRESAK
- 4 Tony POPOVIC
- 5 Mark BABIC
- 6 Robert ENES
- 8 Ante MORIC
- 9 Robert MARKOVAC
- 10 Ante MILICIC
- 11 Dominic USALJ
- 12 Mark RUDAN
- 13 Jim PATIKAS
- 14 David ZDRILIC
- 15 Sean BABIC
- 16 Manis LAMOND
- 17 Paul BILOKAPIC
- 18 Richard PLESA
- 20 Andrew CREWS
- 21 James ASCHNER
- 22 Chad GIBSON

### BRISBANE STRIKERS

- 1 Clint BOLTON
- 2 Chris ZORICICH
- 3 Craig WILLIAMS
- 4 Alan HUNTER
- 5 Steve JACKSON
- 6 Gary PHILLIPS
- 7 Frank FARINA
- 8 Jason POLAK
- 9 Rod BROWN
- 10 Danny WRIGHT
- 11 Troy CRANNEY
- 13 Brad DITTON
- 14 Sean CRANNEY
- 15 Andrew BRAYSHAW
- 16 Chay HEWS
- 17 Glenn GWYNNE
- 18 Mark BATTISTIN
- 19 Reece TOLLENAERE
- 20 Graham ROSS
- 21 Andrew PACKER
- 22 Kasey WEHRMAN
- 30 Robert EDWARDS

# 2ND LEG

## MAJOR SEMI-FINAL

SATURDAY, 10 MAY

1996, 7PM

## MARCONI STADIUM

### MARCONI FAIRFIELD

- 1 Bob CATLIN
- 2 Gary VAN EGMOND
- 3 Jean Paul DE MARIGNY
- 4 Robert STANTON
- 5 Matthew BINGLEY
- 6 Luke CASSERLY
- 7 Andrew HARPER
- 8 Eric HRISTODOULOU
- 9 Ramon CLIMENT
- 10 Brad MALONEY
- 11 Mike SMITH
- 12 John ANGELUCCI
- 13 Aaron HOLST
- 14 Nick BOSEVSKI
- 16 Darren McDONALD
- 17 Francis AWARITEFE
- 18 Paul SOURIS
- 19 Brendan RENAUD
- 20 Leslie POGLIACOMI
- 21 Andrew RAVANELLO
- 22 Dominic LONGO
- 23 Vlado ZORIC

### MELBOURNE KNIGHTS

- 1 Frank JURIC
- 2 Vinko BULJUBASIC
- 3 Fausto DE AMICIS
- 4 David CERVINSKI
- 5 Zoran MARKOVSKI
- 6 Andrew MARTH
- 8 Josip SIMUNIC
- 9 Joe SPITERI
- 10 Ljubo LAPSANSKY
- 11 Oliver PONDELJAK
- 12 Ice KUTLESOVSKI
- 13 Damian VOJTEK
- 14 Daniel TIATTO
- 15 Krunoslav RAZOV
- 16 Ante KOVACEVIC
- 17 John MARKOVSKI
- 18 Adrian CERVINSKI
- 19 Damian GRGANOVIC
- 20 Vilson KNEZEVIC
- 21 Dragi NASTEVSKE
- 22 Damir MOVRIC
- 23 Branko BACAK
- 24 Tom PONDELJAK
- 25 Joe BACAK

### ELIMINATION SEMI-

FINAL SUNDAY, 10

MAY 1996, 6.30PM

## LEICHHARDT OVAL

### UTS OLYMPIC

- 1 Mike GIBSON
- 2 David BARRETT
- 3 Adam CIANTAR
- 4 Derek POIMER
- 5 George SORRAS
- 6 Peter TSEKENIS
- 7 George VALAS
- 8 Kimon TALIADOROS
- 9 Norman TOME
- 10 Chris SLATER
- 11 Kris TRAJANOVSKI
- 12 Walter ARDONE
- 13 Raphael BOVE
- 14 Elias AUGERINOS
- 15 Nick MEREDITH
- 16 Robert IRONSIDE
- 17 Milan BLAGOJEVIC
- 18 Scott BAILLIE
- 19 Con PARADISIS

- 20 George BOUHOUTSOS
- 21 Carlos GONZALES
- 22 Ivan ZELIC
- 23 Alistair EDWARDS

### ADELAIDE CITY

- 1 Jason PETKOVIC
- 2 Sasa NEDELJKOVIC
- 3 Mark YATES
- 4 Milan IVANOVIC
- 5 Alex TOBIN
- 7 Damian MORI
- 8 Brad HASSELL
- 9 Joe MULLEN
- 10 John GIBSON
- 11 Goran LOZANOVSKI
- 12 Jamie PERIN
- 13 Angelo COSTANZO
- 14 Brad ARMOUR
- 15 Joel MARINO
- 16 Dino MENNILLO
- 17 Kosta SALAPASIDIS
- 18 Mark BRAZZALE
- 19 Craig FOSTER
- 20 Daniel MIGNANO
- 21 Michael PIRONE
- 22 Adrian LANDORIO
- 23 Matthew MOORE
- 24 Steven DEGIOVANNIELLO
- 25 Robert SARACENO
- 26 Nick BARBATO

### ELIMINATION SEMI-

FINAL SUNDAY, 11

MAY 1996, 7PM

## SUNCORP STADIUM

### BRISBANE STRIKERS

- 1 Clint BOLTON
- 2 Chris ZORICICH
- 3 Craig WILLIAMS
- 4 Alan HUNTER
- 5 Steve JACKSON
- 6 Gary PHILLIPS
- 7 Frank FARINA
- 8 Jason POLAK
- 9 Rod BROWN
- 10 Danny WRIGHT
- 11 Troy CRANNEY
- 13 Brad DITTON
- 14 Sean CRANNEY
- 15 Andrew BRAYSHAW
- 16 Chay HEWS
- 17 Glenn GWYNNE
- 18 Mark BATTISTIN
- 19 Reece TOLLENAERE
- 20 Graham ROSS
- 21 Andrew PACKER
- 22 Kasey WEHRMAN
- 30 Robert EDWARDS

### SYDNEY UNITED

- 1 John PEROSH
- 2 Robert TRAJKOVSKI
- 3 Velimir KUPRESAK
- 4 Tony POPOVIC
- 5 Mark BABIC
- 6 Robert ENES
- 8 Ante MORIC
- 9 Robert MARKOVAC
- 10 Ante MILICIC
- 11 Dominic USALJ
- 12 Mark RUDAN
- 13 Jim PATIKAS
- 14 David ZDRILIC
- 15 Sean BABIC
- 16 Manis LAMOND
- 17 Paul BILOKAPIC
- 18 Richard PLESA
- 20 Andrew CREWS
- 21 James ASCHNER
- 22 Chad GIBSON



# Hyundai. The Drive Behind The Strikers.



Hyundai Automotive Australia is proud to be the major sponsor of  
The Strikers and wish them all the success for the season.



**Support Sponsors:**



The name in brick fashion!



The beer for here!



uhlsport

Feel the passion!



Greatest memories latest hits!

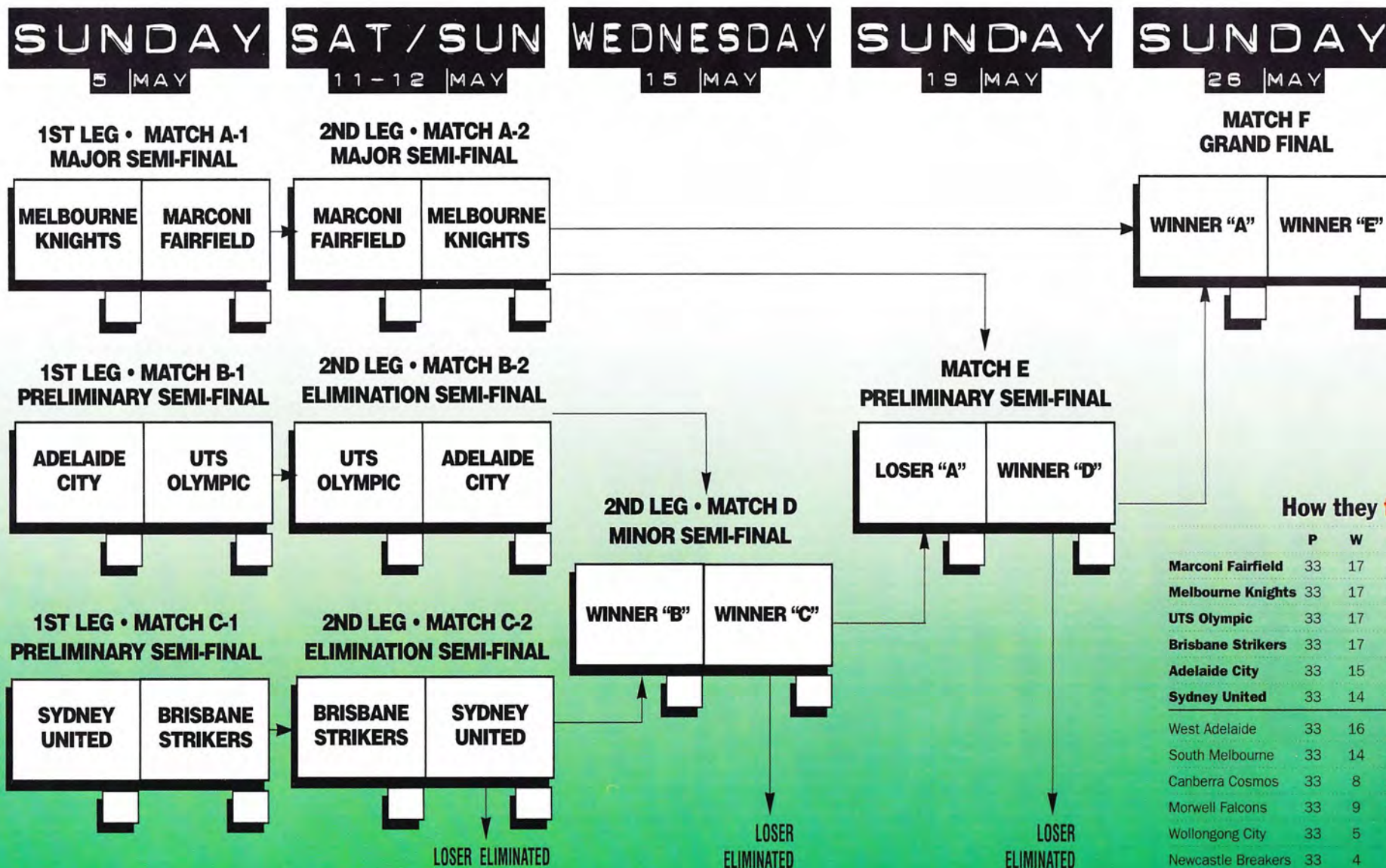


Everything for Queensland!





# TOP SIX CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES



## How they finished

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marconi Fairfield	33	17	9	7	58	35	60
Melbourne Knights	33	17	8	8	50	28	59
UTS Olympic	33	17	8	8	55	41	59
Brisbane Strikers	33	17	6	10	54	35	57
Adelaide City	33	15	9	9	65	40	54
Sydney United	33	14	12	7	47	33	54
West Adelaide	33	16	5	12	49	43	53
South Melbourne	33	14	4	15	50	56	46
Canberra Cosmos	33	8	11	14	46	63	35
Morwell Falcons	33	9	8	16	35	65	35
Wollongong City	33	5	5	23	31	63	20
Newcastle Breakers	33	4	5	24	35	77	17



Enjoy  
**Coca-Cola**

TRADE MARK REGD.



**Supporting Australian Soccer  
As We Take On The World**





# MINOR SEMI-FINAL

WEDNESDAY 15 MAY, 1996

V

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

SUBSTITUTES

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

REFEREE

4TH OFFICIAL

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

SUBSTITUTES

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

LINESMEN

# PRELIMINARY FINAL

SUNDAY 19 MAY, 1996

V

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

SUBSTITUTES

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

REFEREE

4TH OFFICIAL

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

SUBSTITUTES

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

LINESMEN



# MARCONI FAIRFIELD WISHES TO THANK THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT THROUGHOUT THE 1995/96 SEASON

• Major Sponsor • BRESCIA FURNITURE •

- ALITALIA AIRLINES
- ARISTOCRAT INDUSTRIES
- CANTARELLA BROS.
- CARLTON & UNITED
- ECOLAB PTY. LTD.



- LINBAR INDUSTRIES
- RED LEA CHICKENS
- PETER WARREN GROUP
- CHIRPY'S FOOD  
DISTRIBUTORS •

- AAD PRINTING AND STATIONARY • ADVANCED MINI-CRETE • AGL GAS COMPANIES • ALBERT CROKER AND SONS • ARQUILLA BULK TRADING
- AUSTRALIA'S WONDERLAND • B&S WINDOWS • BMC CONSTRUCTIONS
- BOKA ALUMINIUM WINDOWS • CAVALLARO CAKES • CAVASSINI DEVELOPMENTS • CORPORATE EXPRESS • LOU CREMA HAIRDRESSER
- CROLINK TRANSPORT • CUMBERLAND NEWSPAPER GROUP • D'AMICI COLOMBO PTY LTD • ELLAS PHARMACY • EAR CARE • ELDERS REAL ESTATE
- ESTATE AGENTS CO-OPERATIVE • FAIR DEAL TRAVEL • FAIRFIELD CHAMPION NEWSPAPER • FAIRFIELD CITY REALTY • FAIRFIELD FISH MARKETS • FRED ROSE KITCHENS & BATHROOMS • GALLASSO CERAMICS • HANDIBUILD / PETER FOWLER P/L • KORDEK PTY. LTD. • LETTA & SONS • MAMMONE & SONS CONSTRUCTORS • MARIO & SONS PTY. LTD. • MARSON PAVING • McCARTHY & CO. PTY. LTD. • MEDI-HEARING • MIRABELLA LIGHTING (Melbourne) • MR PISA GELATO • NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK • ORIGINAL JUICE CO. • ORLANDO REAL ESTATE • PACIFIC CONCRETE & QUARRIES • PRIMO SMALLGOODS • JIM PRODANOVIC • ALBERT PULIE • ROMA CLASSIC LOUNGE • ROBERT RUSSO
- SARTORETTO INTERIOR LININGS • SCUNDI BROS. FASHION • SMORGAN ARC
- SOUTHCORP WINES • STEPHENSONS FOOD SERVICES • STREETS ICE CREAM • SUNNYBROOK HOTEL • SIP ENGINEERING • TRANSWEST INSURANCE BROKERS • UNIFAB AIR CONDITIONING • UNITED CONCRETE
- UNITED DISTILLERS • VISY BOARD • YE OLDE PRINTERY • MARCONI TRAVEL



From the onset of the national league in 1977, until 1983, the first-past-the-post team - the team that finished the regular season at the top of the competition ladder - were declared champions. This system also applied in 1987.

In 1978, 1979, 1980, 1982 and 1987 the top four or five placed teams competed in a 'post-season play-off' series. But these were separate competitions, and consequently were not given much importance or prestige. Without the incentive of championship glory, and combined with the 'hangover effect' for the team which had already won the championship by finishing first on the ladder, these post-season play-offs were of little significance.

*For the record, here's how the grand finals of these 'post-season play-off' series went:*

Year	Result	Venue	Attendance
1977	(not played)		
1978	Sydney City 4 Marconi Fairfield 2	Sydney Sports Ground	9,136
1979	1st leg: Sydney City 1 Brisbane City 0	Wentworth Park, Sydney	2,532
	2nd leg: Brisbane City 1 Sydney City 1	Perry Park, Brisbane	4,200
1980	Heidelberg 4 Sydney City 0	Bruce Stadium, Canberra	11,126
1981	(not played)		
1982	St George 3 Sydney City 1	Penrith Park	6,145
1983	(not played)		
1987	St George 4 Apia-Leichhardt 0	Parramatta Stadium, Sydney	6,961

The finals system was first used to determine the champion team in 1984.

With a restructure of the national league in 1984 came the adoption of the 'real' finals system. The winner of the finals series were from now considered the champions. And from the outset in 1984, the crowds and media responded positively.

*The following facts refer to championship-deciding finals series only.*

Heidelberg's Micky Petersen had the honour of scoring the first goal in a 'real' finals game - a first-minute header in his team's 1-2 loss to Brunswick in October 1984. Since then and up to the commencement of the 1995-96 series, a further 264 non-penalty shoot-out goals have been scored in a total of 95 finals clashes. The 100th finals goal was scored by Charlie Villani for Adelaide City against Brunswick in the 1986 finals series. In 1993 Marshall Soper netted the 200th finals goal while playing for Parramatta who defeated Wollongong 2-1.

The current final six system has been in place since the 1992-93 season. Before that, the more traditional final five system was applied, except in 1985 when it was a final four series.

Note that in 1984, 1985 and 1986, the national league was split into two conferences, based on a north-south geographic split of teams. The grand final winners of these two conferences then played off - over two legs - for the national championship.

*Championship-deciding grand finals, 1984 to 1994-95*

Year	Result	Venue	Attendance
1984	1st leg: South Melbourne 2 UTS Olympic 1	Olympic Park, Melbourne	10,011
	2nd leg: UTS Olympic 1 South Melbourne 2	St George Stadium, Sydney	11,221
1985	1st leg: Sydney City 0 Brunswick United 1	St George Stadium, Sydney	2,491
	2nd leg: Brunswick United 1 Sydney City 0	Olympic Park, Melbourne	7,560
1986	1st leg: Adelaide City 0 UTS Olympic 1	Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide	12,232
	2nd leg: UTS Olympic 1 Adelaide City 3	Parramatta Stadium, Sydney	14,032
1988	Marconi Fairfield 2 (3p) Sydney United 2 (2p)	Parramatta Stadium, Sydney	17,064
1989	Marconi Fairfield 1 UTS Olympic 0	Parramatta Stadium, Sydney	23,387
1989/90	Marconi Fairfield 0 UTS Olympic 2	Parramatta Stadium, Sydney	26,352
1990/91	South Melbourne 1(5p) Melbourne Knights 1(4p)	Olympic Park, Melbourne	23,318
1991/92	Melbourne Knights 0 (2p) Adelaide City 0 (4p)	Olympic Park, Melbourne	15,463
1992/93	Marconi Fairfield 1 Adelaide City 0	Parramatta Stadium, Sydney	13,376
1993/94	Melbourne Knights 0 Adelaide City 1	Olympic Park, Melbourne	13,970
1994/95	Adelaide City 0 Melbourne Knights 2	Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide	15,573

*The five most experienced finals teams*

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Grand final wins
South Melbourne	27	10	5	12	41	45	2
Adelaide City	26	17	1	8	39	22	3
UTS Olympic	26	14	2	10	37	37	1
Marconi Fairfield	23	11	5	7	41	31	3
Melbourne Knights	18	6	5	7	22	21	1

*The five most experienced finals players*

Name	P	W	D	L	No. goals
Alex Tobin	26	17	1	8	0
Joe Mullen	25	16	1	8	3
Mike Petersen	25	11	5	9	4
Sergio Melta	24	15	1	8	5
Ian Gray	23	11	5	7	2

*The highest goal scorers in finals*

Name	No. goals	*Francis Awaritefe, Charlie Egan, Frank Farina, David Lowe, Sergio Melta, Steve Maxwell, Zlatko Nastevski, Paul Wade have each scored 5 goals in finals
Damian Mori	7	
Marshall Soper	7	
Carl Veart	6	

*The five most experienced finals referees*

Name	No. finals games	No. grand finals
Richard Lorenc	14	1
Chris Bambridge	10	4
Don Campbell	9	2
Gary Power	9	0
Robert Davies	6	

*The five most popular scorelines in finals*

Score	Frequency
1-0	25
2-1	20
2-0	12
3-1	8
0-0	4
3-3	4

\* 265 goals have been scored in all 95 finals games up to before the 1995/96

Ericsson Cup finals.

\* 15 of these games have ended in draws.

\* The most number of goals scored in any one finals match was eight when Preston and South Melbourne drew 4-4 in the 1985 finals series.

\* The highest winning margin in any one finals match was seven when Marconi defeated South Melbourne 7-0 in the 1992/93 finals series.

\* The highest winning margin for an away team in any finals game is two goals. This has occurred 10 times.

\* The highest scoring penalty shoot-out score was 7-6. This has occurred three times.

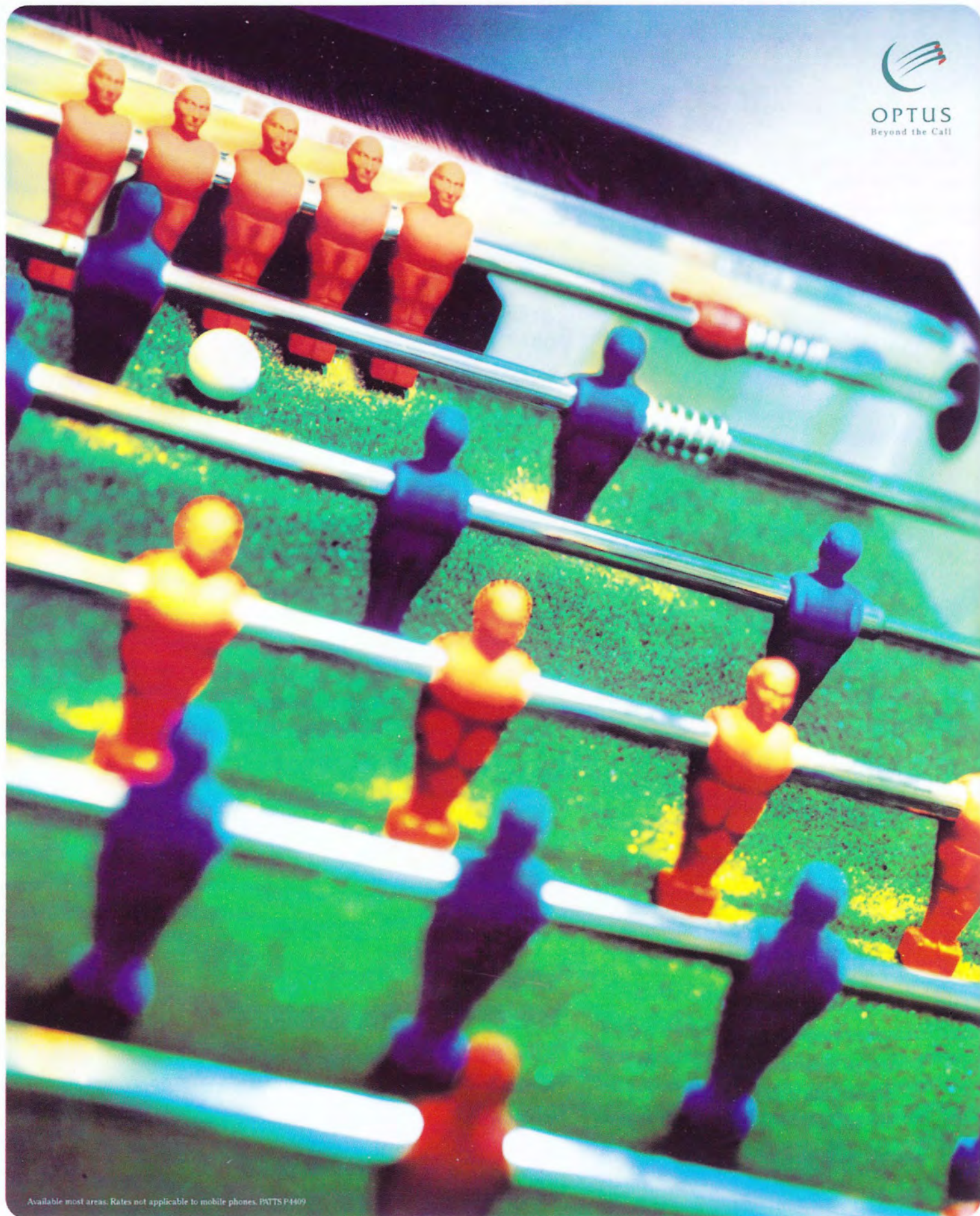


Compared with Telecom's normal rates, Optus is always cheaper for international calls up to 15 minutes long.

Phone overseas with Optus and you're bound to save.



OPTUS  
Beyond the Call



Available most areas. Rates not applicable to mobile phones. PATTS P4409





# THE MATIC VIEW

Former Adelaide City coach Zoran Matic now knows how the little boy outside of the lolly shop window looking in at the wondrous assortments of sweets on display feels.

You could say that for 10 seasons, the man who brought a new meaning to the word success, was the envy of all when he virtually owned that lolly shop.

Of course, the shop we are referring to is the Ericsson Cup where the three times championship winner Matic played the Pied Piper.

During his unprecedented reign as the head of the Adelaide City dream machine, Matic often led the way with his unique approach to the game while other coaches could only try and follow.

Titles in 1986, 1991-92 and 1993-94, runners-up medals in 1992-93 and last season and numerous appearances in the semi-finals tell the story of a man who has nearly made the national league his own.

However, it all ended last season when the hugely likeable maestro bowed out of the coaching ranks following Adelaide City's 2-0 loss to Melbourne Knights in an emotional Grand Final at Hindmarsh Stadium.

It was supposed to have been the ultimate farewell party for one of South Australia's favourite sons, but it is history now that the Knights rained on the parade.

Still, Matic typically wasn't one to shed tears of disappointment. He looked forward to taking on new challenges outside of his beloved football.

Up until a few weeks ago he had been enjoying his temporary break from the game that has been his life.

He had some space to himself and a little more time for his family and it gave him the chance to have a breather, take stock and recharge the batteries for possibly another tilt at coaching.

But now the roles are reversed. Like the little boy, he is the one on the outside looking in – and

**“For me, this is THE time of the season and I would be telling a lie if I said I didn't miss it.”**

he admits it is tough to take.

“Early on in the season I didn't miss it at all,” Matic said. “I enjoyed going to the games and not having the pressure.

“But, as the finals have come closer, I have started to feel an edge. For me, this is THE time of the season and I would be telling a lie if I said I didn't miss it.”

Having been an interested spectator now for a little over eight months, it hasn't been difficult for Matic to form rather strong impressions about the top six series.

He admits the fact that the likes of Melbourne Knights and Sydney United will be without three or four players each because of Coca-Cola Olyroo commitments if they make the Grand Final has complicated the issue of who will win the title.

“Losing such good players would be a very difficult hurdle to overcome,” he said. “It then comes down to luck on the day and which team has the best depth.

“I have always said that defence will win you championships. Whether they could overcome losing so many players is another matter.

“Looking at it realistically, I'd have to say that things are made to order for Marconi Fairfield and Brisbane Strikers.

“They won't be affected too badly. Marconi Fairfield has a lot of depth and that will help them greatly.

“Brisbane Strikers have a good mix of youth and experience and if they play the Grand Final in Brisbane they'll be hard to beat. I should know. I don't think I ever took a team up there and came away with a win.

“But there is a nagging feeling that maybe some of their players mightn't be able to cope with the finals atmosphere. This will be a new experience for most of them.

“Some players adapt to it well and others... well it doesn't matter how much coaching and time and effort you put into them... they just fall to pieces.

“Back in November I wondered to myself whether UTS Olympic would be able to handle the pace. I didn't like what I saw against West Adelaide recently.

“The defence is not so tight though they have some good finishers and a capable coach.

“West Adelaide did so well against UTS Olympic but I wonder whether that was the Grand Final for them. They are a good team and are

capable of providing shocks.

“Sydney United have some quality players but I believe they have suffered this season through a lack of experience.

“They have been too eager, especially in front of goal. They have created a lot of chances and (coach) Branko Culina would be happy with that. I don't think you can blame him for some of their problems.”

And that left his old club, Adelaide City.

“If you ignore Adelaide City you do so at your own peril,” he said. “They know what the finals are all about and they have two outstanding front men in Damian Mori and Brad Hassell.

“I don't think there are too many combinations which can match them.”

While he would not come out with a straight out tip for the championship, Matic is convinced the finals will be exciting though he believes there won't be too many high scoring games.

“The championship is going to be determined by the team that plays the percentages,” he said.

“They'll give nothing away.” •

## ZORAN

## MATIC





# NATIONAL ANTHEM



## THE NATIONAL ANTHEM Advance Australia Fair

Composed by 'Amicus' (Peter Dodds McCormick 1835-1916)  
Arranged by Squadron Leader M. A. Butcher, RAAF

MM ♩ = 104

*f*

Aus- tra- lians all let us re- joice, For we are young and free; We've gol- den soil and  
Be- neath our rad- iant South- ern Cross We'll toil with hearts and hands; To make this Com- mon-

*mf*

wealth for toil; Our home is girt by sea; Our land a- bounds in na- ture's gifts Of  
wealth of ours Re- nowned of all the lands; For those who've come a- cross the seas We've

beau- ty rich and rare; In hist- ory's page, let ev- ery stage Ad- vance Aus- tra- lia Fair.  
bound- less plains to share; With cour- age let us all com- bine To Ad- vance Aus- tra- lia Fair.

*ff* *poco rall.*

In joy- ful strains then let us sing, Ad- vance Aus- tra- lia Fair.

EDITOR: ETTORE FLACCO

PRODUCTION EDITOR: PATRICK MANGAN

FEATURES WRITER: RAY GATT OF "THE AUSTRALIAN".

STATISTICS AND RESEARCH: ANDREW HOWE

PHOTOGRAPHY: SPORTING PIX AND DUANE HART, SPORTING IMAGES

LAYOUT AND DESIGN TEAM: NADIA GUARDIANI, ANGELA DONARELLI

COLOUR BY: DIGITAL COLOUR PRINTED IN AUSTRALIA BY: DIGITAL COLOUR PRINTING PTY LTD

THE ERICSSON CUP 1995/96 TOP SIX CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES IS PUBLISHED BY PRIME ADVERTISING FOR SOCCER AUSTRALIA (THE GOVERNING BODY OF AUSTRALIAN SOCCER). **ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:** PRIME ADVERTISING, 81-87 KING WILLIAM STREET, FITZROY, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA 3065, AUSTRALIA. PO BOX 200, CARLTON SOUTH, VICTORIA 3053, AUSTRALIA. **TELEPHONE:** (03) 9415 1181 **FACSIMILE** (03) 9415 1187.

ALL MATERIAL PUBLISHED IN THE ERICSSON CUP 1995/96 TOP SIX CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES IS COMMISSIONED. HOWEVER, WHILE ALL CARE IS TAKEN, THE PUBLISHER ACCEPTS NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATERIAL PUBLISHED.



# SPOT THE BALL...



...THE ONE THAT CHAMPIONS  
AND THE FUTURE CHAMPIONS PLAY WITH !

  
**Mitre**<sup>®</sup>

Official Ball Supplier to Soccer Australia and the Ericsson Cup.



# FLASH BACK

## THE SOUTH SHOOT-OUT

If this year's Ericsson Cup Grand Final goes to a penalty shoot-out, one person who'll have more sympathy than most for the penalty-takers is Paul Trimboli. In 1991 the South Melbourne midfielder experienced first-hand the pain and the pleasure of sudden death from 12 yards.

The Final, played against Melbourne Knights in front of a passionate derby crowd of 23,000, ended 1-1 after extra-time, and Paul had the misfortune to miss his penalty kick.

"Fortunately it was early on in the shoot-out, so we had the chance to recover," he recalls. "It was strange - I felt confident during the penalties that we were going to win.

"After Mike Petersen missed, he was inconsolable. He couldn't bear to watch, so I more or less had to give him a running commentary on how it was going. The crowd atmosphere was amazing, like nothing I'd ever experienced in club soccer in Australia, and it was extraordinary because 16 penalties were taken and 7 were missed. That was the kind of pressure the players were under."

South Melbourne eventually won the shoot-out 5-4 to send their fans into ecstasy. Trimboli could feel sympathy for the Melbourne Knights who missed one penalty too many, and equally will be sympathetic towards anyone having to take a penalty in the 1996 Final.

"It's a lot of pressure for a player to be under - to have the responsibility of taking a penalty in a Grand Final shoot-out. I've got a pretty good record as a penalty-taker, but I've also missed my share over the years," he admits. "It's one thing to miss a penalty during a normal league match, but to miss one in the Final is completely different."

## THE DAY THAT MADE A DYNASTY

If you're looking to pinpoint the day that marked the beginning of Adelaide City's reign as a major power in Australian club soccer, it would surely be October 19, 1986, the day the Zebras claimed their first national league title. This year marks the tenth anniversary of Adelaide City's against-the-odds Grand Final victory over Sydney (now UTS) Olympic, but current City captain, Alex Tobin, remembers it like it was yesterday.

"Everyone who was involved in that game

remembers it as the turning point of Adelaide City. We'd struggled in previous years both financially and in terms of performances on the park, and the Grand Final that year

was a catalyst for really turning the club around.

"It was a very young team, and we only had a shoestring squad," the Coca-Cola Socceroo defender looks back at a very different time for the current Ericsson Cup giants. "We had the 11 regulars and two substitutes and no-one after that. As far as I know, we didn't have a player registered apart from that 13, so if we'd had any injuries or suspensions everything would have stopped."

In those days the Grand Final was a home-and-away event, and City had lost the first leg 1-0 in Adelaide. Olympic only needed a draw in Sydney to clinch their own first national title, but, as it has done

But Tobin had been optimistic even after Adelaide City had lost the first leg.

"We hadn't been outplayed in Adelaide, so we felt confident that if we played well enough we'd be able to win. The ground was in very good condition which helped the way we wanted to play, and that's the way it turned out.

"It was the first Grand Final that I played in and the first that I won, so it was very special to me. Out of the couple of Grand Finals that we've been lucky enough to win I probably remember that one most vividly. I think most of the success that we've had since has been quite significantly linked with that day."

## OLYMPIC GOLD

UTS Olympic's Alistair Edwards has played in his fair share of memorable games - scoring the winner for Australia against Sweden in 1992, being part of the Millwall team that knocked European Cup Winners Cup holders Arsenal out of the 1995 FA Cup - but



▲ AURELIO VIDMAR (left), Joe Mullen and Charley Villani celebrate Adelaide City's 1986 national league triumph.

many times since, Adelaide City's resilience and fighting spirit, not to mention skill, saw the South Australians through.

The Zebras shocked the partisan 14,000 home crowd by racing to a 3-0 lead just before the hour mark, thanks to goals by Sergio Melta, Steve Maxwell and Charley Villani. A 66th minute reply from Olympic's Stuart Johnstone kept the match in the balance until the final whistle.

"We weren't very well-known in Sydney at the time and we weren't expected to cause any dramas for Olympic in the second leg. The crowd didn't come alive until Olympic scored, and the away goals rule didn't apply that year, so we were certainly under pressure until the final whistle."

nothing compares with the feeling of winning a Grand Final in his home country.

Olympic, who had been beaten in the Grand Final by Marconi Fairfield the previous year, finally clinched their first national title in 1990, and quite a day it was too. "It was an amazing atmosphere," Alistair reflects on the occasion. "You could hardly believe it was a local game - it was more like a European match. And when we beat Marconi Fairfield, who'd won the Final against us in 1989 with a goal in the last minute, the crowd just went wild."

Olympic supporters still speak about the game in hushed tones, as do most Australian soccer supporters for that matter, recalling the national league record crowd of 26,352 that flocked to Sydney's



# THE YANKOS ASSESSMENT



*Former Socceroo captain Charlie Yankos talks with Ray Gatt of 'The Australian' about today's Ericsson Cup Grand Final between Melbourne Knights and Marconi Fairfield.*

Defending champions Melbourne Knights are good enough to overcome the loss of key players Danny Tiatto, Joe Spiteri and Frank Juric and make it back-to-back titles today at Olympic Park.

I have been greatly impressed with the Knights and the way they have turned around what looked like being an ordinary season.

Certainly, like a few others, I had written



them off as championship material in the early part of the season when they struggled badly. The fire in the belly was missing and they seemed to be suffering some sort of let down following their championship success the previous season.

That often happens with teams who win the championship. For some reason or other they sometimes cannot seem to back-up the next season and lack the intensity and determination.

The departure of coach Mirko Bazic earlier in the year only added fuel to the speculation that the Knights were not the same team which carried all before them last year.

But, to the club's credit, they picked themselves off the floor and with Ian Dobson taking charge they showed the commitment and courage of which champions are made.

Under Dobson's astute coaching, the Knights stormed into the finals with a superb string of performances, especially in the last third of the competition.

Apart from Adelaide City, there was not a better performed team during the latter part of the preliminary season.

That strong run to the finals – and their subsequent charge into the Grand Final following the two-legged major semi-final triumph over Marconi – convinced me they are ready to hold up the championship trophy again.

Unlike others, I don't think they'll be badly affected by the loss of Tiatto, Spiteri and Juric.

Even the fact that young back-up goalkeeper Vilson Knezevic has played just one senior game in two seasons is a minor hiccup as far as I am concerned.

Sure, Tiatto and co. are terrific players but don't forget the Knights have a superb back-up squad.

For me, the key player is former Socceroo Andrew Marth. Now that he is back in the side, it will make the Knights just that much harder to beat.

He adds so much strength, confidence and inspiration to the team. The players always respond to him.

The fact they were able to account for Marconi in the major semi-final without Marth was a real bonus.

Then there are the Cervinski brothers – David and Adrian – Fausto De Amicis, the Pondeljak brothers – Tommy and Ollie – and big John Markovski.

While they are not a so-called glamour side like Marconi, I can't see too many weaknesses in the Knights' line-up and I think that they might have it on Marconi physically.

For my money, Marconi deserved to be minor premiers. They were the most consistent team over 33 gruelling rounds though it was a tight finish in the end.

Marconi are an excellent team and have some terrific quality players. They like to knock the ball around and if you let them play then they'll make you look second rate.

The trick is to close them down and not give them any room to manoeuvre which would cause them to get rattled.

Still, they were certainly outstanding against Adelaide City and if they produce that sort of form again, the Knights could be in for a tough afternoon.

Marconi's strength obviously lies with their strong central defence in Dominic Longo and Paul Souris, while Vlado Zoric can cause problems if allowed to dictate terms in midfield.

Andy Harper has had a great season and he is a thoroughly committed player who will run all day. Of course, you can never overlook the goalscoring ability of Francis Awaritefe, who has a habit of being in the right place at the right time.

This is going to be a tight game and I believe the Knights will win the Grand Final in what should be a low scoring match, especially if Melbourne turns on a cold, wet and windy afternoon. ●

Paramatta Stadium that day. The Olympic midfielder/striker, now back at the club after stints in Singapore, Malaysia and Britain, was thrilled for his team's long-suffering fans. "It was great because our supporters had been waiting a long time for success, and the club had finally fulfilled its potential."

Alistair's first half strike set Olympic on their way before Robbie Ironside scored to seal an historic 2-0 victory and claim Olympic's first and, so far, only Australian title. The much-travelled Coca-Cola Socceroo is hopeful it won't be his last taste of championship success. "It's the pinnacle of a player's career in this country," he explains simply. "When you win the Grand Final, you're part of the best team in the country. It's a great feeling."

## COLE'S GRAND DAY OUT

The idea of a finals series and one-off Grand Final to decide the champion team is a well-entrenched concept in both Australian Rules football and the rugby codes. But in 1980 the first-past-the-post league table system was equally entrenched in the Australian soccer community.

There was a Top 4 series each year after the championship had been decided, but it hadn't quite captured the imagination of local soccer fans. The Top 4 Final clash between Heidelberg United (now Collingwood Warriors) and Sydney City, though, may have signalled the birth of the Grand Final idea.

City had already been crowned league champions for 1980 when they faced Heidelberg in the Canberra game. 11,126 predominantly neutral fans rolled into Bruce Stadium for the match, and the grandeur and excitement of the occasion must have rung a few bells at Australian Soccer Federation headquarters.

Gary Cole, Heidelberg's star striker at the time, remembers the day well. "We had a strong team in those days, but Sydney City always seemed to have the wood on us. We were certainly the underdogs but we went there to win."

To the surprise of most pundits, that's exactly what they did. United, in fact, stunned everyone by storming to an emphatic 4-0 victory, and Cole himself scored a memorable hat-trick.

"It wasn't an easy win, by any stretch of the imagination. The match was in the balance for a long time, and a few of us actually still carry the scars from that game." He smiles. "I've still got a few of Gerry Gomez' stud marks on my leg."

"It was awesome to score a hat-trick. Games between the two clubs had always been really tight, so it was particularly satisfying. A lot of people from Canberra came out to see the game, and it was a great day."

"There was a huge crowd of our supporters to meet us at the Melbourne airport, more than were at the actual game. The victory was really important to the club – even now, if any of the 1980 team goes back to the club, they get a severe case of back-slapping."

Cole, who scored a record seven goals for Australia in a World Cup qualifier against Fiji the following year, had extra reason to celebrate Heidelberg's triumph. "I won the best player award that day, too. Malcolm Fraser presented me with a voucher for a colour TV. It's still working," he says appreciatively. ●

Compiled by Patrick Mangan



# REFEREE EDDIE LENNIE



**Current Status:** Class One FIFA Referee

**D.O.B:** 5th October 1959

**Married:** To Linda

**Children:** Pamela aged 11, Edward aged 8

**Occupation:** National Manager – Magellan GPS Systems

## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- 1976 Became a Class Three Referee, Renfrewshire Referees Association
- 1978 Referee European Youth Tournament (Germany)
- 1980 Referee American Youth Tournament (Pittsburgh)
- 1983 Senior listed official (Linesman) Scottish Football Association
- 1986 Linesman Dundee Utd v. Heart of Midlothian (Scottish Cup semi final)
- Senior listed Official (Referee) Scottish Football Association
- 1989 Referee Rangers v. Celtic Res (Scottish Premier Res League)
- 1991 Joined A.S.R.F. (WA Division), Class Two Referee
- 1992 Appointed as Linesman N.S.L.
- 1993 Referee WA 1st Division D'Orsogna Cup Final
- 1994 Appointed as Referee in Singapore Premier League
- Referee WA 1st Division D'Orsogna Cup Final
- Appointed as Referee in N.S.L.
- Town & Country Referee of the year

1995 Referee Grand Final – Adelaide City v. Melbourne Knights

Samsung N.S.L. Referee of the Year

Town & Country Referee of the Year

1996 Appointed FIFA Referee

Officiated Olympic

Qualifying matches

(Oceania Group)

FIFA Appointment

Olympic Games

## CAREER SUMMARY

**International** 20 matches

**Scottish Senior Football**

165 matches

**WA State League** 160 matches

## AMBITIONS

To referee the World Cup



SUNDAY 26 MAY, 1996 OLYMPIC PARK MELBOURNE

## MELBOURNE KNIGHTS



## MARCONI FAIRFIELD

1	Frank	JURIC
2	Vinko	BULJUBASIC
3	Fausto	DE AMICIS
4	David	CERVINSKI
5	Zoran	MARKOVSKI
6	Andrew	MARTH
8	Josip	SIMUNIC
9	Joe	SPITERI
10	Ljubo	LAPSANSKY
11	Oliver	PONDELJAK
12	Ice	KUTLESOVSKI
13	Damian	VOJTEK
14	Daniel	TIATTO
15	Krunoslav	RAZOV
16	Ante	KOVACEVIC
17	John	MARKOVSKI
18	Adrian	CERVINSKI
19	Damian	GRGANOVIC
20	Vilson	KNEZEVIC
21	Dragi	NASTEVSKI
22	Damir	MOVRIC
23	Branko	BACAK
24	Tom	PONDELJAK
25	Joe	BACAK

## SUBSTITUTES

☐
☐
☐
☐

**REFEREE** Eddie Lennie

**4TH OFFICIAL** Eugene Brazzale

1	Bob	CATLIN
2	Gary	VAN EGMOND
3	Jean Paul	DE MARIGNY
4	Robert	STANTON
5	Matthew	BINGLEY
6	Luke	CASSERLY
7	Andrew	HARPER
8	Eric	HRISTODOULOU
9	Ramon	CLIMENT
10	Brad	MALONEY
11	Mike	SMITH
12	John	ANGELUCCI
13	Aaron	HOLST
14	Nick	BOSEVSKI
16	Darren	McDONALD
17	Francis	AWARITEFE
18	Paul	SOURIS
19	Brendan	RENAUD
20	Leslie	POGLIACOMI
21	Andrew	RAVANELLO
22	Dominic	LONGO
23	Vlado	ZORIC

## SUBSTITUTES

☐
☐
☐
☐

**LINESMEN** Gordon Dunster, John Bowdler

**INSPECTOR** Roger Lamb





the *f*irst word  
in smallgoods



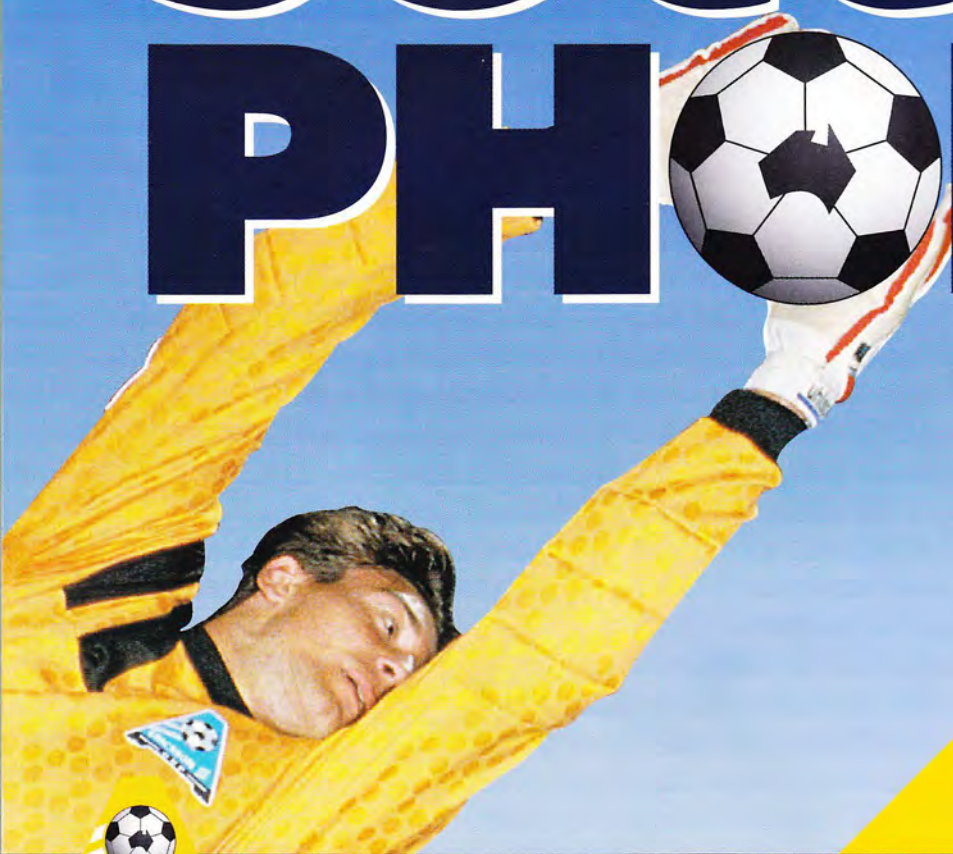
FIORA DISTRIBUTORS (AUST.) PTY. LTD.

154 CHRISTMAS STREET, FAIRFIELD VICTORIA 3078 • TELEPHONE: (03) 9481 3488 FACSIMILE: (03) 9486 1260



**A GREAT DEAL FOR YOU AND A GREAT WIN FOR SOCCER!**

# SOCCER PHONE



**\$40**  
FROM EVERY SOCCER PHONE  
SOLD WILL GO TOWARDS  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



**ERICSSON**  **MOBILE PHONE GF 337**



The Soccer Phone from Ericsson and Optus is the perfect way to support your favourite Ericsson Cup club and get some of the best in mobile telecommunications. It's one of the smallest and lightest mobile phones ever made with all of the intelligent features that you would expect from Ericsson.

**PLUS**, you will be helping to develop Australia's soccer stars of tomorrow - \$40 from every phone sold will go to youth development programs.

**AND**, when you purchase a Soccer Phone you will receive a bonus supporter pack including:

- A PHONE FLIP IN YOUR ERICSSON CUP CLUB'S COLOURS
- AN EXCLUSIVE ERICSSON CUP CAP
- A CHANCE TO WIN A TRIP TO THE 1997 WORLD YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS PLUS HUNDREDS OF OTHER PRIZES

**ERICSSON** 

 **OPTUS**  
communications

**CALL 133 999 FOR YOUR NEAREST OPTUS WORLD STORE**



 **OPTUS World**  
Communicate with us

**THE SOCCER PHONE IS EXCLUSIVE TO OPTUS WORLD**

VIC Permit No: 96/448 issued on 27.3.96. NSW Permit No: TC 96/1724.

7867